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THE DOWAGER EMPRESS OF CHINA





## **GREAT QUEENS**

*By the same Author*

LIFE OF SIR JOHN HAWLEY GLOVER, G.C.M.G., R.N.  
MEMORIES OF FOUR CONTINENTS  
ETC.

# GREAT QUEENS

FAMOUS WOMEN RULERS OF THE EAST

*By*

LADY GLOVER

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DEDICATED TO  
MY DEAR LITTLE GRANDDAUGHTER  
BENITA

“ Nevertheless new cities shall arise and new shapes of beauty, and song that shall seem to the hearers immortal, until the world itself shall end.

“ And when the world is ended there shall be new worlds, and these too shall live and die, eternal and punctual, even as the blossoms of spring.”

MAURICE BARING.

## FOREWORD

**I**T has been a labour of love to write a foreword for this last book of my dear mother. The MS. was in Messrs. Hutchinson's hands when she passed away peacefully on February 8th of this year, and though she was never able to revise the proofs, the book has not been altered in any material degree.

Not having inherited her literary skill, I have not felt competent to make any changes in the text as she left it, and the modern practice of having books written by paid professionals is one which I find repellent. Those who share my feeling will, I trust, forgive the book its blemishes and imperfections.

In the last few months of her life my mother was disappointed at her inability to get photographs of some of the various Queens of whose lives she was writing. It has been my endeavour to complete the book in this respect, and I wish to take this opportunity of expressing my grateful thanks to all those who have given me their generous help.

In particular my thanks are due to His Majesty's Secretary of State for India for permission to reproduce the portrait of the Rani of Jhansi which hangs in the Library of the India Office, also to the Superintendent of Records and the Librarian for their valuable assistance.

I owe a deep debt of gratitude to Their Highnesses the Maharanee of Cooch Behar and the Maharanee of Travancore for sending me such charming photographs of themselves and for permitting me to include them in this book.

For the photograph of the Empress Zauditu of Abyssinia I have to thank Mr. C. F. Rey, the well-known explorer; for leave to photograph the portrait of Chand Bibi, Queen of Baijapur, I am greatly obliged to the Trustees of the British Museum and to Mr. Laurence Binyon, Keeper of the Oriental Prints; and to Sir Vernon Kell I am most grateful for much time and trouble taken in assisting me in various ways.

Some photographs it has not yet been possible to obtain, and as I want the book to be published while my mother's memory is still green amongst those who knew and loved her, I prefer not to delay longer, but to let it go to the press without making further researches.

In conclusion, I would like to offer a humble

## FOREWORD

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apology to the various authors from whose works quotations have been made without acknowledgment. The biographies were compiled from rough notes made from books to which I have not had access, and though in some cases I have been able to trace the name of the author, I have never been able to give any further details.

ROSETTA FAIRFAX.

*November 12th, 1927.*



## AUTHOR'S NOTE

**T**HIS book has been written with the sole idea of refuting a statement that has been so often made, i.e. that women have never accomplished anything really great in any branch of the world's work. In England this may have been true to a certain extent prior to the passing of the Married Women's Property Act of 1870, for till then women had been merely the chattels of their husbands, to whom they had been expected to defer in all things, and had not even been allowed a voice in the spending of their own money or in the management of their own estates. But it is a notable fact that, all through the ages, whenever women have been able to burst their bonds and take a leading position, in no matter what sphere, they have always risen nobly to the occasion, and have done their work well—as well as, or even better than, men would have done it in similar circumstances.

There are innumerable examples in the Western world of women who have been called upon to fill positions of first importance, and who have done



so brilliantly, wisely and beneficently. But these have been set aside, and remarkable women from various Eastern nations and from different epochs in the world's history have been chosen with a view to showing to what heights the women of the Asiatic, African and Polynesian races can rise, given the opportunity, though they are frequently and rather disparagingly spoken of as "poor down-trodden Orientals" or "natives."

## PREFACE

**I**N presenting this little book to the public, I must ask the kind indulgence of my readers towards any discrepancies they may detect in its pages. When quoting from old manuscripts and books of ancient date, some written by native historians who are not always clear in expression, it is difficult to avoid slight confusions and errors. Much history has been handed down to us through legends, and different writers have taken different views, and have given different accounts for the same event, so that it is not always easy to present facts as they actually took place. But I have discarded mere tradition as far as possible, and the following sketches of the lives of notable women rulers are founded on fact, and may be taken as fairly accurate. I might have added several others, but finally decided to omit them, sufficient reliable information concerning them not being available.

In the course of my reading I have been most forcibly struck by the colossal importance of the female throughout Nature. Motherhood endows

her with a great responsibility, i.e. the protection and guidance of the young ; she thus becomes their leader and it is hers to teach them discipline. This is one of the laws of Nature, and Nature's laws are inexorable—part of the universal evolutionary plan, or so it appears to me.

Those who have made a study of animals and their ways and habits are agreed that the elephant is the wisest of all beasts. He is the strongest, the most sagacious and the most easily trained and taught. To see an elephant piling up teak logs and placing them exactly in line, even to the third of an inch, is to marvel at his great mental capacity and extraordinary powers of observation. In his natural state, a member of a herd roaming the jungle, he is a fierce fighter, and it does not require much imagination to realise that, equipped as he is with a formidable proboscis and two strong ivory tusks, a quarrel between two young males for the possession of a female must mean a fight to a finish. So frequent and so deadly are these encounters that the species would have run serious risk of extermination had not Nature pointed out to these wise creatures the only way to save themselves from such disaster. Instinct told them that the herd must have a ruler, a leader to be obeyed in all things. In every herd a Queen is chosen

to fill this exalted position. She it is who leads them to the best feeding-grounds and to a plentiful supply of water. Her rule is the rule of a despot, and indeed it must be so, or she could not quell the violent quarrels and fierce battles which take place all the year round among the males of the herd, though naturally they are most frequent in the breeding season. The Queen Elephant is never very young ; she has abjured the coquetry of her early years, and has gained experience both in the ways of her subjects and in knowledge of her country, so that under her sway the herd lives happily and enjoys a peace not to be obtained in any other way.

In the insect world again, do not the industrious honey-bees toil and labour at their work under the rule of the all-powerful Queen ?

It seems to be a rule of Nature that all large communities shall have a leader, and instinct tells them to choose the best. To fight is natural to every male, and especially to the idle male, who loves activity and excitement—sex excitement, jealousy, and the covetous blood-lust. These are elemental passions, and no civilisation eliminates or can ever eliminate them. Nothing will ever prevent war : there will always be fighting throughout Nature, from Man down. Nor is peace at

any price a doctrine to be upheld : it is the refuge of the coward, the sneak, the self-seeker ; while courage, bravery, justice and rectitude will for all time take their place among the great things of life, the things that really matter, even though they be scoffed at by men of the baser sort. But feminine rule invariably makes for peace.

Looking back through the pages of history, we see, for example, how notably prosperous Britain has always been under the sovereignty of a Queen ; trade has expanded and great deeds have been done ; unknown lands have been discovered, explored and settled ; and that civilising influence which always follows the Briton, has been introduced even into the remotest corners of the earth, an influence that has produced an Empire that is the envy of the rest of the world.

While studying the subject of the prosperity of our own nation under the rule of British Queens, it occurred to me that it would be interesting to review the conditions in other countries under female jurisdiction. It was a big subject and called for a vast amount of research, for some of the most famous women rulers reigned long before the Christian era, and their fame has been handed down either through legends, inscriptions cut in stone or accounts in ancient manuscripts, so that

many books of reference had to be consulted. When selecting Queens for this purpose, I tried to compare the lives of women who were natives of different parts of the world, who were of different races and of varied stages of civilisation, and whose upbringing, education and outlook on life must have been very diverse. One virtue seemed common to them all : their first consideration was the good of their people, the cultivation of land to ensure a plentiful food supply taking a more prominent place than preparation for war. Nevertheless they invariably maintained an army sufficiently strong and well-trained to repel invasion. There was always, too, that inborn feeling of the mother to protect her young at all costs, and so long as these women were allowed to reign without interference from the male (whether husband or Government official) all went well. But masculine blood-lust, jealousy, love of power, cupidity, self-seeking, envy and intrigue were always at work to undermine the good influence of the ruling Queen. They were indeed courageous women who were able to stand against such overwhelming odds, and they must have possessed tact and determination in no ordinary degree.

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**INDIA**



## QUEEN CHAND<sup>1</sup>

THE scene of the story of Queen Chand, who was called a "noble Queen," is laid in the Dekhan, and the time in which she lived and ruled synchronised with the reign of Queen Elizabeth of England. What a difference between the landscapes of the two countries ! England with hedgerows, small fields, and trees scattered broadcast ; the Dekhan with no hedges, unenclosed fields, and, except in the gardens near the villages, no trees, with the exception of distant clumps here and there marking a Mussulman's shrine or the site of a hamlet. Both these Queens were powerful rulers, and, moreover, they had one great interest in common—the love of sport. Few in England realise that this contemporary of Queen Elizabeth was a woman of great ability and of equally great political talent and of wide learning, who ruled over a realm as large and a population as numerous and as rich as that of

<sup>1</sup> *A Noble Queen*, by Colonel Meadows Taylor, is the source of much of the information regarding Queen Chand contained in this sketch of her life.

England : that she was continually surrounded by jealous enemies, but always "preserved by her own personal valour and endurance her kingdom from destruction and partition."

Queen Chand Sooltana was the daughter of Hoossein Nizam Shah, King of Ahmednugger, who, in 1563, was leading a great crusade against the Hindoo Prince Beejanugger of Beejapor, in the course of which a fierce battle was fought on the banks of the River Krishna, in which both sides suffered so severely that further fighting was impossible. Consequently an alliance was made between Prince Beejanugger and King Ahmednugger, and was cemented by a double marriage ; the Shah of Beejapor gave his sister to become the bride of Moortuza, the Prince Royal of Ahmednugger, while the latter took the King's beautiful daughter to be his wife.

The treaty of peace having added new provinces to their kingdom, the King and Queen of Beejapor at once set to work to bring them into order. The Queen personally took a very active part in this ; a Hindoo herself, she visited the Hindoo Princesses and explained and smoothed away many difficulties. She was her husband's constant companion and rode with him wherever he marched or hunted ; she accompanied him when he went to put down

local rebellions, and was by his side in every skirmish. She knew as much about war and sport as he did.

A contemporary portrait of the Queen, taken in profile, shows very regular and beautiful features, large soft brown eyes with long lashes and arched eyebrows, a gentle mouth, with a firm round full chin, and a remarkably broad forehead, indicating a woman of strong character and force of will. She was a great linguist and could speak Persian and Arabic, Turkish and Joorki, as well as various local dialects. She was also an artist of considerable talent, and drew and painted flowers with delicate accuracy ; she played upon the *vina* and sang delightfully in Persian and in her own native tongue. But alas ! she had no children.

After sixteen years of happiness, when Queen Chand was about twenty-five, her husband died, leaving her regent and guardian to his nephew and successor, Ibrahim. With the exception of the Great Mogul, the regent of the Kingdom of Beejapor was the greatest and most powerful Mussulman ruler in India. The King had had no other wife, and Chand had been his trusted adviser and confidant in all matters ; she was therefore able to take up the reins of government with confidence, feeling assured that she had the love

and respect of her people. But in spite of her great popularity, there were still men about her Court who lived by intrigue and who took every opportunity to further their own designs and to stir up strife and encourage mutiny, often causing troubles and tragedies too long and too complicated to be recounted here. The Queen's policy was always one of peace.

We are told of her regency that "it was some labour for a woman, mentally as well as physically, for during the whole of the day, from early morning till the afternoon with little intermission, the current business of the State was constantly before the Queen. No accounts were kept more accurately than those of the State revenues. She received her Court in white muslin robes, Persian fashion, with a filmy white scarf edged with gold over her head, seated on a throne ornamented with arabesques, in a room the ceiling of which was supported by slender marble columns. Indeed, after her husband's death the Queen wore no colours except when with the troops or following the chase. Her seat on horseback was perfect : her figure was very small and slight, like that of a girl. She usually rode after the fashion of a man, as was the custom in the Dekhan, on a milk-white Arab ; soft-quilted blue Genoa velvet formed the

seat of the saddle, while the whole of the saddle-cloth, housings and broad crupper-piece, as well as the head and neck-pieces of the suite, were richly embroidered with heavy gold patterns, studded with seed pearls, in the style for which Beejapor was then famous, and of which some of the embroidered carpets, throne-seats and curtains, still preserved in the Asar Mahal, frayed and faded now, are interesting examples." "On its crest, between the horse's ears, was a plume of glittering feathers, which stood in a socket. They were made of bright gold tissue set with diamonds that flashed in the sun. The bit was inlaid with gold and diamonds, and the bridle, of the same velvet as the saddle, was embroidered with seed pearls. The Queen wore a light steel morion, round which was bound a sort of turban. Her tunic, high to the throat, was of white cloth of gold, and her breast was crossed by a baldrick of broad gold lace, held in at the waist by a white scarf that was embroidered in gold and hung down at her right side. With the exception of high yellow leather Persian boots, embroidered, which reached above her knees, she wore no colour at all."

Thus attired, the Queen would start on one of her hunting expeditions, accompanied by her Court, at early dawn, just as the first grey mist had been



dispersed by the rising sun. Away to the north was a wide barren plain dotted here and there with groups of mausoleums ; then the country spread out into wavy undulating lines of hills that melted into the distant horizon.

With the rising of the sun the plains assumed a new beauty. The outline of Jooma Mosque and the Mehture Mahal were outlined in gold and the white terraces glittered in the sunshine. The Royal party " had ridden slowly up the rising ground beyond, and spread out very considerably, evidently with the purpose of beating the grassy slope for game. On the right and left flanks of the line, nearly a mile from the centre on both sides, heavy bodies of cavalry marched at a slow pace onwards, regulating their movements by those of the party in the centre, sometimes halting, if they had proceeded too far, sometimes despatching parties further to the right or left to drive the game as much as possible to the centre." Elephants were in war panoply with green and scarlet housings, and the mounted men were richly and gaily clad in gala garments. Some were armed, with fluttering pennons on their spears. When the Queen arrived on the crest of the first long elevation, she drew rein and turned to look over the city. Before her were waiting light carts

containing hunting leopards, and men with sparrow-hawks or small falcons were waiting to let fly at quails or partridges. Soon the scouts on the crests of the hills made signs that a herd of antelopes and black buck were approaching. The leopard carts advanced, the Queen in line keeping place with them. "One of the leopards had its cap removed and the antelope pointed out to it, when it leaped gently from the cart to the ground, making its way gradually towards the herd, which, partly lying grazing, was in the valley below, while the cart was driven on to the right to keep up the notice of the deer, who appeared to watch it unconcernedly. Meanwhile the Queen, with some of her footmen and attendants, pressed up the ridge, whence the scene could be easily and completely watched.

"They could see the leopard distinctly making its way down the slope, taking advantage of every inequality of ground, of small bushes, of ant-hills, and even of tufts of grass, creeping softly from one to another, and crouching to the ground if the deer showed the slightest symptoms of alarm. It was a strange sight to watch the extreme sagacity of the leopard in securing its natural prey. Until it got within a certain distance from which the deer could be run down, anything might cause a failure :

some skittish doe or fawn might run and alarm the whole herd, and if so, all chance of capture must be abandoned. Now, however, the leopard's runs were shorter and shorter and more frequent, and yet there was no alarm. The deer were lying on a spot where the grass was short and sweet. The leopard at last made one spring forward towards the buck from a distance of some yards, but ere it could seize the deer, it had bounded off at a pace which can hardly be described, followed by its pursuer, and for a few seconds it seemed doubtful whether the speed of the deer or the leopard would be greater. The actions of both were beautiful; the deer with its head thrown back, its body stretched till its belly almost touched the ground, the leopard's movements so rapid that they could hardly be followed by the eye. But there was no doubt at last. Putting forth all its speed and strength, the leopard seized the buck by the throat with its powerful teeth and both rolled over together."

But the Queen was not content with one trophy of the chase. "I think," she said, "this herd took to the west. We will go southward. Perchance we may find a heron or a floriken, for the falcon is impatient." She loosed the hood of her favourite, and cast off the cord that tied its legs to her wrist,

and it darted in pursuit of its quarry as soon as a bird rose silently out of the grass, followed at full speed by the Queen on her fleet horse. Keeping the bird in sight, she outdistanced her followers. Our English Queen of that period was also a lover of hawking and a constant follower of the chase, but it is hardly possible that she turned out in the magnificent style of the Eastern monarch.

The history of Queen Chand's reign is too varied and too long to describe at length, and a brief sketch could not give any idea of the intricacies of intrigue and difficulty through which she successfully steered ; but finally treachery prevailed, and the last years of her life were harassed by the constant discovery of dastardly plots against her.

In times of invasion her courage was unfailing. We read in the old chronicles how, " fearless among the storm of shot, dauntless among the horrid cries and shrieks that filled the air, she was seen everywhere, distributing rewards, giving water to the wounded and thirsty, and encouraging all." But the political events of the time became more and more threatening, and were not to be averted either by former treaties or by the wisdom and heroic perseverance of the Queen, and the details of the local historian Jerishta form " a melancholy record of the last struggles of the unhappy and distracted

kingdom.” Without entering too deeply into historical details, they may be briefly sketched, so as to render Queen Chand’s position intelligible.

Though she retained Nihung Khan as Commander of the Forces, she fully realised that he lacked administrative ability. She therefore appointed an Administrator, Mahomed Khan, an officer of much experience, and for a time all went well ; but his ambition was not proof against the temptation to increase his power. He aspired to become regent and to deprive the Queen of all authority. “ This the Royal lady resisted, and wrote urgently to her nephew, King Ibrahim, to send her such a force as would keep the rebellious Minister in check.” But here again she was frustrated by treachery. The continued disturbances in Beejapor had at length attracted the attention of the Emperor Akbar, and about 1598 or 1599 he determined to put a stop to them in person. He marched south, and captured the important fortress of Assergarh.

But the last tragedy was yet to come. The Queen was weary of war, but there was no friendly voice to give warning of approaching danger. When the storm broke, Abbas Khan, one of her devoted generals, besought the Queen, even with tears, to save herself and the young King. “ For as

soon as you and the boy have gone," he said, "we might hold out for a time as a point of honour and make terms by which every life would be saved. As to treasure, let it perish, mother, as I might offer it as a ransom for the fort." Thus he pleaded, but the Queen would not listen. It seemed a dishonourable act to desert those who had stood by her with such valour and devotion in all her trials. "What would be said of her but that the Queen who had fought the fearful 'Battle of the Veil' had absconded secretly from her people at night to save her own life, leaving all to perish. No ; if death were nigh, let it come to her there." Treachery once more, and for the last time, was her undoing. A rocket was fired as a signal. "Queen Chand is in treaty for the surrender of the fort."

In an instant there were infuriated cries. The mass of her retainers surged into the great hall, shouting "Treachery!" while others cried, "Where is the Queen? Cut her to pieces!" She was seated on the throne, and did not move except to rise from her seat. For a moment the foremost in the crowd were awed by her presence, but others rushed in, thirsting for her blood, and struck her down with swords. The body of the murdered Queen was guarded by her people, and laid out with the usual formalities. Her face

was not changed, except to wear the expression left by a glorious death, and those who saw her beautiful features for the last time could never forget them or the gracious lady who had ruled over them and helped them in their troubles.

On the following day the troops of the Great Mogul were seen marching on the fort—there was no one now to defend it.

Beejapor is now a magnificent ruin. But Ahmednugger flourishes as an English station and cantonment, and the stout old fort is in perfect preservation to-day. In both places and in the country around, nay, in all Dekhan, the memory of Chand Beebee,<sup>1</sup> who defended the fort and was murdered by her ungrateful people, and her heroic deeds and devotion in battle are still sung and recited as the fittest memorial to a Noble Queen.

The happenings in the Dekhan during the reign of Queen Chand when she ruled for peace, even though she excelled in military knowledge and always kept the scales of Justice evenly balanced, show clearly how sex jealousy and intrigue were the main causes of her downfall and of that of her kingdom. Men determined to usurp the supreme power for the gratification of their own ambitions, were ready to sacrifice not only their Queen but

<sup>1</sup> Beebee=lady.

their country to their personal advancement and to their own evil passions and disloyalty. Love of gain, love of notoriety and power lurked in the dark recesses of their minds. We see the selfsame characteristics displayed in the present day by men who seek leadership for their own aggrandisement, and who are ready to sacrifice their misguided *followers at any moment if by doing so they can attain their desires and aims.* Thus with the passing of the centuries no higher standard of morality seems to have been attained either through evolution or through what we call civilisation, for when we look back at the last twelve<sup>1</sup> years of world turmoil, we see all around us the cupidity of man and his callousness to the suffering of others in the attainment of his own ends.

<sup>1</sup> This was written in 1926.



## LAKSHMI BAI, RANI OF JHANSI

**W**E now pass from the memorable reign of a noble Queen of the sixteenth century to those more recent years, still within the memory of living man, when the horrors of the Crimean War were followed by the terrible Indian Mutiny, a period of history which gives much food for reflection, and, like all history, needs sifting by the hand of Time. The historian of contemporary events must perforce be swayed, however unconsciously, by personal prejudice ; and emotions and conflicting influences all help to distort the real facts, and it is only when later research throws new light on obscure happenings that a just conclusion can be arrived at. When searching through old chronicles dealing with the causes of wars, or rather of the events which led up to them, one is astonished to find how frequently the versions accepted as history differ from the actual facts. The true causes are lost sight of, and history is oftentimes only the reflection of the

view-point of the historian, and is not always the unbiased truth.

The history of Lakshmi Bai, Rani of Jhansi, is a study in psychology, and as such can be applied to many events, both ancient and modern. She was born in the same month of the same year as that very remarkable woman the late Dowager Empress of China, whose guiding hand, through long years, in a country that bristled with political problems, saved the nation more than once from destruction and from the chaos into which it had fallen through bad previous administration. Her reign was a long one of personal influence and high diplomacy. The short one of the Rani of Jhansi is the record of a loyal woman turned into an enemy by a flagrant act of injustice.

Mone Bai, afterwards known as Rani Lakshmi Bai, was born on November 18, 1835. She lost her mother at the early age of four years, and the whole charge of her upbringing devolved upon her father. Consequently she passed the days of her infancy mostly in the company of men. She is described as a sweet-tempered child, surpassingly beautiful, and beloved by everyone in the palace. She was fond of joining in the juvenile sports and play of the ex-Peshwa's adopted sons, and of taking part in their martial exercises. The little Mone

Bai seems to have endeared herself to her step-mother, Cheema Bai, who, in describing her childhood, says: "The Rani, while young and before marriage, used to fly kites, set wheels in motion and keep them rolling on, dress herself as Rani among her girl companions, make maid-servants of some and on others inflict punishment for neglect or dereliction of duty." Some of these amusements "remind one of the boyish feats of the great founder of the Persian Monarchy, as described by Xenophon in the *Cyropædia*. The two adopted sons of the ex-Peshwa were, according to the custom of the time, taught the elements of knowledge by a tutor; and as Mone Bai was always with them, she also learned to read and write, just as, by joining them in manly sports, she learned riding, swordsmanship, lance-play and archery." Thus her youthful days were spent in both physical and mental exercise, which give a wider scope for her abilities than was general among the young Maratha girls of that day. She must have enjoyed a happy childhood. Later, when she arrived at marriageable age, the astrologer carefully examined her horoscope, and declared that the girl's future was singularly felicitous, indeed, she would wake up one morning and find herself a Rani. Her father, Maropantha, instead

of expressing great joy at this prediction, merely asked if there was a suitable young man to be found for her in the vicinity of Jhansi. The astrologer was not pleased at finding his prediction received with such coldness, and repeated what he had said—that the girl would one day wear a crown. He added that Srimanta Gengadhar Rao of Jhansi had recently lost his wife, and that he would see that she married the Prince. There was no difficulty in bringing this marriage about, for the beauty of Mone Bai was proverbial, and the Prince expressed a strong wish to make this charming girl his wife. Accordingly she was taken to the capital of the Raja of Jhansi, where the wedding took place in due course. There was great rejoicing when the new bride, dressed in splendid attire, entered the palace after the ceremony. All who were assembled to witness the grand procession declared that she was the very personification of the Goddess of Fortune. She is described as being at this time “of a gentleness and beauty and attractive qualities that endeared her to everyone.” Mone Bai now came to be known as Rani Lakshmi Bai.

About a year later the Rani gave birth to a child, whose death, when three months old, was a great grief to both parents ; so much so indeed that

Gangadhar Rao fell ill, and never thoroughly recovered from his disappointment. As time went on and the Rani had no more children, he began to fear for the succession, and felt a strong desire to adopt his nephew, Damodar Rao, which he eventually did, and made him his heir. The ceremony of adoption was performed with great pomp, and an account of it was sent in due course to the British Political Agent at Bundelkhand.

After making all the arrangements necessary for the continuance of the Raj in his family, Gangadhar Rao died, after having ruled for ten years. The Political Agent at Bundelkhand professed to feel grave doubts as to the legality of the adoption of his nephew by the late Raja, and referred the matter to the Government of India, at the same time expressing his opinion that the Paramount Power, having the right to make the State of Jhansi *Khas* (dependent), it was not advisable to let this opportunity pass, and that if Jhansi were made *Khas*, it would be well to offer the Rani a pension. When this Report arrived, the Governor-General, Lord Dalhousie, was making a tour in Oude, so that six months elapsed before the Report was placed on His Excellency's table. The Rani also addressed a letter to the

Government, expressing her approval of the adoption of Damodar Rao. But an Order was received to the effect that "Jhansi is not, and never has been, an independent State. It is a territory under the suzerainty of the British Government." Accordingly Jhansi was annexed, and the Rani was offered a pension of five thousand rupees a month.

It would appear that the Duke of Wellington and some other statesmen of note of that day declared that this annexation was contrary to the terms and engagements entered into between certain native States and the British Government. Later, when Major Ellis entered the town of Rajbati, in Jhansi, he interviewed the Rani, who sat behind the Purdah, and read to her the proclamation which stated that after the annexation of Jhansi she would "be given allowances and her rank and position maintained." When he was taking leave, she exclaimed, with strong emotion in her voice, showing how deeply her feelings were wounded, "*Mera Jhansi denga nahin!*" "My Jhansi I will never give up!" She had no thought of grasping the throne for herself, but fully acquiesced in the decision of her husband to adopt a son after the death of her own child. So there was in her heart no greed of power or desire for

self-aggrandisement ; but she loved her country, and was not willing to see it pass into the hands of an alien race. " My Jhansi I will never give up ! " she cried.

However, the State of Jhansi was made *Khas*. Lord Dalhousie stated that, in his opinion, the State jewels and ready money were really the property of the late ruler's adopted son, and should be kept in deposit until he came of age, though he considered that the said son was not entitled to rule. On receipt of this despatch from the Governor-General all jewels and money were handed over to the Rani, together with absolute possession of the palace with all its belongings and effects. The Rani, from a feeling of self-respect, declined to accept the pension which was offered to her (though she accepted it later), and commenced to take measures for the restoration of the Raj.

A Petition was sent to the Court of Directors in England. In this document it was stated that " the State of Jhansi was not given to us by the English Government. During the rule of the Peshwa our ancestors had done many eminent services and obtained it as a reward for their gallantry and prowess. Under such circumstances the English Government had no right to the

State and was therefore not right in annexing it." Apparently her faithless agents in London did not work in the interests of the Rani of Jhansi, but spent their time in all sorts of pleasure and pastimes, forgetful of their trust, eventually joining the Russian army in the Crimean War. Thus the Petition was not placed before the Court of Directors in a proper light, and the principality of Jhansi passed away from a family that was loyal to the British rule.

The Rani now devoted herself to bringing up Damodar Rao, her late husband's adopted son, and had him most carefully educated. When the Sepoy Mutiny broke out in all its fury in Meerut, in May 1857, the mutineers proceeded to Delhi, and raised the only surviving descendant of the Great Mogul, Mohammed Bahadur, to the throne which had been occupied a century before by his proud ancestors. Looting and massacre were rife. At Cawnpore, Nana Sahib, the adopted son of Bagi Rao II, smarting under an injury which he thought the British Government had inflicted upon him, took the lead, and was responsible for deeds of cruelty and horror that even to-day shock both native Indians and Englishmen, and at that time absolutely staggered humanity. The fire of mutiny, fed by such inflammable material, made rapid



headway, and Jhansi was not backward in fanning the flame. Britons who had lived long in India did not at first think that the Sepoys would rise, nor did the old Commissioner, Captain Skene, believe that Jhansi would join the mutineers. But the lull before the storm was of but short duration, for the troops rose without warning, the fort of Cawnpore was soon in the hands of the insurgents, and that greatest of crimes, a general massacre, was soon an accomplished fact. How much the Rani knew and how far she was implicated in the rising will never be known, but it is said that none of her servants were present at the massacre, which seems to have been mainly the work of the old followers of the British.

The rebels then decided to take a Hindoo for their leader, and went to the Royal palace and asked Rani Lakshmi Bai to rule over them. The Rani expressed her deep regret at what had taken place, "and wished from the bottom of her heart that such an infernal deed had not been done." But after much debating, she accepted their offer as being an evil lesser than that of allowing the fighting men to continue on their devastating course of bloodshed and murder without a leader ; she stipulated, however, that she should not assume sovereign authority until the soldiers undertook

to stop the massacres and meet the British in open combat and conduct themselves as true warriors.

On June 10, a proclamation was made in Jhansi, investing Lakshmi Bai with the insignia of a Royal ruler. On ascending the throne she threw all her energies into the work of firmly establishing the Raj. She raised fresh troops, inaugurated a mint, and strengthened the forts.

The British were very anxious to take measures for the recovery of Jhansi, but they had not sufficient troops available after the massacre ; so it was not until the following March that a rumour became current that Major-General Sir Hugh Rose (afterwards Field-Marshal Lord Strathnairn) was on his way with a considerable army. Hearing this, some of the Rani's councillors suggested the advisability of coming to terms with the British. She agreed to this, and sent an embassy of two of her officers to the English General, who was on his way to attack her capital, it then being too late to communicate direct with the Governor-General. But the Rani's ambassadors did not arrive at the British camp until Sir Hugh Rose had almost reached the Betwa River : his men took them to be spies, and they were summarily put to death without even being given a hearing. By March 20

a considerable portion of the army was advanced against Jhansi, followed closely by the main body, and for thirteen days the conflict raged. Sir Hugh Rose says in his Report that the women were working in the batteries and carrying ammunition.

Tantia Topee, a native prince who had always been friendly to the English, and who had saved the lives of several of them during the massacres, hearing that the Rani of Jhansi was sore pressed by the enemy, went to her assistance. This was unwelcome news to Sir Hugh Rose, and he therefore sent a detachment of picked men to the Betwa River to stop the advance of the relieving army. Whereupon Tantia lighted some hundreds of torches to make known his approach, the sight of which heartened the defenders of the Jhansi fort. Tantia Topee had never met the Rani, but was going to her help as a recognition of her courage, on which Sir Hugh Rose also commented. In fact, "the Rani's rare courage and heroic conduct had so impressed him that he was candid enough to declare openly, and also to record in black and white, that such a brave lady he had not seen before in any country." Such high commendation, coming as it did from such an authority, speaks volumes, thereby proving that the Rani's

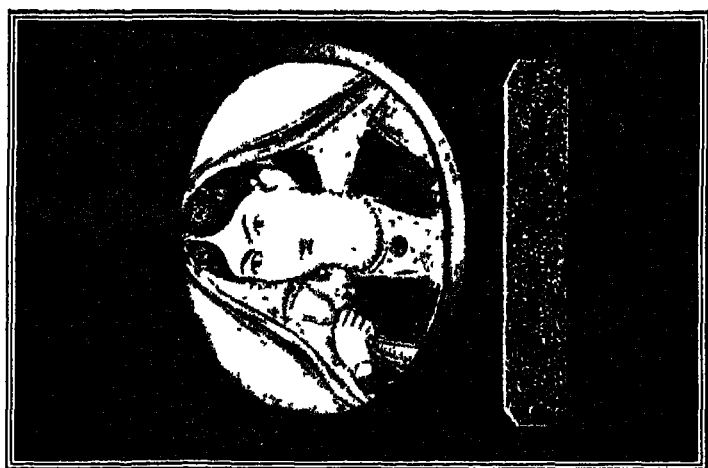
fame as a warrior had even eclipsed the fame of gallant women of European birth. The British entered the city by scaling the walls, and fierce hand-to-hand fighting ensued. On hearing that the city had been taken, the Rani went about among her people on horseback, and continued fighting all that day and night. The struggle was renewed and continued during April 4, though the defence was conducted by only fifty men of the Rani's bodyguard, who gallantly held their own against an overwhelming force of British troops. When night drew on, the Rani was advised to leave the palace. Seeing the wisdom of this, she left under cover of darkness with the remnant of her bodyguard, her object being to join Tantia Topee's army. The fortress of Jhansi was occupied by Sir Hugh Rose on April 5, 1857. It was said that the loss he sustained, including the action in Betwa, amounted to three hundred and forty-three killed and wounded, of whom thirty-six were officers.

It would seem from the histories of that time and from the writings of the natives of India, that the advice given to Lord Dalhousie, which led to the conflict at Jhansi, caused a miscarriage of justice which had the effect of turning both Tantia Topee and the Rani of Jhansi, who had previously

been friendly to the British, into bitter foes. Their losses, it is said, were estimated at five thousand, and one thousand of the dead were buried in Jhansi.<sup>1</sup>

Rani Lakshmi Bai was not a fighting woman in the sense of wishing for war, but she had the strong instinct that is implanted in the heart of every mother to fight to the death to protect her home and children. She was fighting for her country. After she joined the army of Tantia Topee, there were more desperate encounters with the British, in which it sustained very heavy losses. At length Tantia went to Gwalior, a neighbouring State, with the object of raising fresh recruits, leaving the task of defending the fort of Calpee in the hands of the Rani. There was heavy fighting on May 23, when the Rani of Jhansi, with the remnant of her army, was forced to retire in the direction of Gwalior. But, like Holkar, the great Mahratta chief, Sindhia, had not joined in the Mutiny, and he now went to her attack at the head of his army. When the Rani heard that Sindhia was coming to meet her, she and her retinue, all unarmed, went forward on horseback to pay His Highness a visit of ceremony ; he was amazed at her daring and courage. But nevertheless he

<sup>1</sup> *East and West*, by Shambhoo Chander Dey.





ordered her arrest. "His soldiers, however, to his great disgust, would not come forward to do his bidding, which was quite at variance with the rules of civilised war." The Rani took in the situation at a glance, and with quick wit turned it into a jest. "Maharaja, if I do not surrender of my own accord, none would have the courage to capture me. I have come only to present the dress which men like you and the Indore Chief deserve to wear. Do you therefore take my female attire and the ornaments on my person and give me instead your tights and turban." Sindhia was discomfited and abashed, and fled to Agra. Then the Rani entered his capital and made the Phulbagh Palace her headquarters. A nephew of Nana Sahib was made Governor of Gwalior, and the money and jewels found in the treasury were distributed by the Rani equally between the troops in Gwalior and her own men.

The news that the Rani Lakshmi Bai had taken possession of Gwalior was totally unexpected, and Sir Hugh Rose was promptly ordered there with all his available soldiers. He arrived on June 16, and at once opened battle at Morar, in which the rebels were defeated. The Rani was seen all through the fighting, in soldier's uniform, riding



among her men and encouraging them in every way. This resolute woman, fearless alike in council and in the field, seemed to be everywhere at once. But inch by inch her troops were pressed back into a defile, and when they reached its highest point the British Hussars were ordered to charge. She faced them bravely, but her men were forced to retreat, and in spite of her efforts to rally them, she was carried along with them. She might even then have escaped, but her horse stumbled and fell. A Hussar, close on her heels and doubtless ignorant of her sex, cut her down to rise no more. That night her devoted followers burned her body, to save it from falling into the hands of the enemy.

Thus passed away a remarkable personality. Peaceful and gentle in the zenana, she was like an enraged lioness at the thought of the surrender of her country to an enemy. She will always be regarded as one of the remarkable women of history, and in her own country will hold an honoured name and place in the affections of her people. Colonel Malleson, the well-known writer on the history of that period, says, "Whatever her faults in British eyes may have been, her countrymen will ever believe that she was driven by ill-treatment into rebellion; that her cause

was a righteous cause ; and that the treatment she received at the hands of Lord Dalhousie was one of the main causes of disaffection in the Bundelkhand and Central India in 1857-58. To them she will always be a heroine.”



## THE RULERS OF BHOPAL

KUDSIA BEGAM. Born 1801. Died 1881. She ruled for eighteen years, and abdicated in favour of her son-in-law, Nawab Jahangir Muhammad Khan.

NAWAB SIKANDAR BEGAM. Reigned thirty-three years, first as regent for her daughter, Nawab Shah Jehan Begam.

NAWAB SHAH JAHAN BEGAM. Born 1838. Succeeded 1858. Married—

(1) Bakshi Baki Muhammad Khan Nasrat Jang, Commander-in-Chief, Bhopal Army.

(2) Nawab Sidik Hasan Khan.

H.H. NAWAB SULTAN JAHAN BEGAM. Born July 10, 1858. Succeeded 1901. Married Ahmad Ali Khan. Abdicated in 1926 in favour of her youngest son, Sahibzaida Hamidullah Khan, born in 1884. Heir Apparent, his daughter.



## I. KUDSIA BEGAM

**I**T is pleasant, after reading of the tragic endings of Queen Chand and the Rani of Jhansi, to turn to the State of Bhopal, which lies to the south of Jhansi and Delhi, and to review the reigns of the four famous Begams who ruled there for so many long years and with such wisdom and understanding that finally Bhopal came to be looked upon as the model Native State of India. Those who know India best realise most fully the consummate tact, firmness and personality required to steer the ship of State among hidden rocks and quicksands to a safe and peaceful harbour. It is a curious and most interesting fact that, though their fierce and turbulent people craved the excitement of war and were averse to any sort of modern progress, all four of the Begams were continually striving for permanent peace and for the opening up and development of their country. In this they sought the help of the British residents, and acted upon their advice in times of crisis. The manner in which they kept on terms of friendship with their advisers testifies to their broad outlook

on the future, their one aim and object being the welfare and lasting good of their subjects.

It is now a hundred and twenty-five years since the birth of Kudsia, the first of these great Begams of Bhopal (1801), and during that century and a quarter their rule has been uninterrupted, save for the period when Nawab Jahangir Muhammad Khan, the husband of Sikander Begam, Kudsia's daughter, usurped the supreme power. In studying the history of the Native States of India, one cannot fail to be struck by the many obstructions and oppositions to progress that have been raised by some of the husbands of the Begams in contrast with the superior enlightenment of the rule of the Begams themselves when death relieved them of the interference of their Consorts. Nor, considering the trouble they caused, is it to be wondered at that the Begams found it necessary to lay down very stringent rules and regulations for the observance of those who aspired to the position of Consort.

The true origins of war are to be found in many different and remote causes, often slight in themselves, but when drifted together like sand blown by the wind, make such a formidable heap that they compel resistance. In India the question of succession accounts for a far greater amount of unrest,

often ending in war and bloodshed, than has ever come to light through the pages of history. The greased bullet of the Sepoy, given as the principal cause of the Mutiny, vanishes like mist in the sun of modern research. It is more than probable that the Rani of Jhansi never heard of it ; but she felt the poisoned sting of interference by an alien race in matters of the succession, a sting that turned true loyalty into bitter hatred. And intrigues for succession are still a grave danger in the India of to-day.

During the whole of the childhood of Kudsia Begam, Bhopal was going through the stormiest period in its history, and her lines were laid in no very pleasant places ; but she was early renowned for her liberality, her kindness of heart, and the simplicity of her life. She ruled her State wisely and well for eighteen years, but at the end of that time her overbearing son-in-law plotted to get the supreme power into his own hands, and brought pressure to bear on her and forced her to abdicate in his favour. But Jahangir Muhammad Khan was not a successful ruler, though he managed to retain the reins of government, despite the fact that he was only Consort, and that his wife Nawab Sikander Begam was Kudsia Begam's daughter and rightful successor. He ruled till the end of



his life, leaving an only daughter nine years of age, whom he desired should succeed him, thus passing over her mother, whose throne he had usurped.

After the abdication of Kudsia, she retired into private life and never again took part in public affairs. A *jagir* of Rs.4,986,682 was conferred upon her, the management of which remained in her hands till the day of her death. The Government of India showed her every mark of the respect to which her previous position had entitled her. She was accorded a salute of fifteen guns, and after the Delhi Durbar, by special command of Her Majesty Queen Victoria, she was invested with the Order of the Crown of India (1872). Whenever the Agent to the Governor-General or the Political Agent visited Bhopal, they never failed to pay Kudsia Begam a visit, not only as a token of esteem, but because they considered it a privilege to hold conversation with her.

During the time of her seclusion, Kudsia Begam witnessed the vicissitudes of no less than three reigns. Towards the end of her life her tranquillity was troubled by Sidik Hasan Khan, who became a disturbing element in the State after his marriage (as her second husband) with Kudsia's granddaughter, Nawab Shah Jahan Begam. Kudsia

Begam resented his interference when, shortly before her death, he sent a Memorandum to the Governor-General, in which he stated that she had grown too old to administer her *jagir* ; that she could no longer control her affairs, and that therefore they should be brought under the management of the State. But the British Government had by that time become only too familiar with the interference and evil practices of the Consorts of the Begams, and were determined to stop their meddling. Therefore the Governor-General refused to entertain any such proposals, and the Government of India eventually stepped in and endeavoured to straighten matters out for the ex-Begam.

Kudsia Begam seems to have been a woman of strong personality, and worthy of the greatest honour and respect. She ruled well in very troublous times. Her enemies were members of her own household, and her very amiability favoured the domination of her unscrupulous son-in-law. She was always loyal to the British Throne ; the Government of India paid high tribute to her, and deplored the loss which the State sustained when she went into retirement and the country was ruled, not by her daughter, the rightful heir to the throne, but by the latter's ambitious husband.

On his death his widow found it a difficult task to bring order out of the chaos that had prevailed during his rule and to restore the old policy of peace and progress that was laid down by Kudsia Begam.

## II. NAWAB SIKANDAR BEGAM

**T**HE State of Bhopal is, next to Hyderabad, the most important Moslem State in India ; it has an area not far short of Holkar's (Indore). Its ruling family is of Afghan origin, descendants of Dost Muhamad Khan, a distinguished officer of the Mogul Emperor Aurangzeb. " It is acknowledged in all despatches and reports of the Government that during the Mutiny no ruler had remained a firmer friend to the English than Nawab Sikander Begam, the ruler of Bhopal, and that the State had done signal service to British rule."

" The history of Bhopal may be divided into two periods. The first began with the life and conquests of Nawab Dost Muhamad Khan, the founder of the Bhopal Dynasty ; the second period embracing events subsequent to the treaty with the British Government. It would appear that the decay of the Great Mogul Empire was followed by a period of war and strife throughout the whole

of Hindustan.” “The doors were shut on order and freedom and contemporary history is little more than a record of war, massacre and oppression. In the south and east the English, with science in their train, were step by step advancing their power, but in every other part of the country anarchy and confusion were rife. Although scarcely two centuries have elapsed, obscurity is already drawing her veil over those troublous times, for where war, bloodshed and civil strife prevail, history can shed but a feeble light.”<sup>1</sup>

Gradually, however, the English succeeded in getting the upper hand, and the Bhopal State concluded a treaty with the British Government, which guaranteed her from all dangers and interference from outside, and with the signing of this treaty the first period of her history terminates.

The second period commences with the restoration of peace, and men had time to turn their minds once more to the cultivation of the soil, and order and reform took the place of chaos. Now arose the need for political foresight and wisdom in guiding the destiny of the State. “Government by means of laws and justice is fraught with greater difficulties than government by means of the sword,

<sup>1</sup> *An Account of my Life*, by H.H. Nawab Sultan Jahan Begam.

and in a community where every law was likely to be looked upon as an infringement of personal liberty, these difficulties were increased tenfold. Among those to whom the task of overcoming them was entrusted, none stand out more conspicuously than Nawab Sikandar Begam. Endowed with all the sterner attributes of a ruler, she possessed in addition that softer quality, the love of peace and mercy, which only attains its full development in a woman's heart and by which alone true happiness can be spread. It must be regarded as a proof of God's special favour to Bhopal State, that for three successive generations he has placed the reins of Government in female hands. The Nawab Sikandar Begam holds the same place in the history of Bhopal that the Emperor Akbar holds in the history of India. When Akbar ascended the throne the country was in a highly critical state, but by his wisdom and foresight dangers that threatened on every side were overcome, and though centuries have passed away, the excellence of his administrations continue to be recognised in every civilised country. Nor did Nawab Sikandar Begam rule her country less worthily."<sup>1</sup>

“ Born and bred during the darkest days of its

<sup>1</sup> *An Account of my Life*, by H.H. Nawab Sultan Jahan Begam.

history, and surrounded from her cradle by men who though brave-spirited were ignorant and illiterate, she spent the first thirty years of her life amid scenes of conflict and clash of arms, when the only tales that beguiled the time were those that told of battle and bloodshed, and the very atmosphere was hot with war and rumours of war. There would have been nothing unnatural had the surroundings of her youth imbued her too with the turbulent spirit of the age ; but she was by nature peace-loving, and from her earliest days deeds of blood and tales of blood were alike hateful and repulsive to her. The wise acts that subsequently characterised her reign, mark her as one specially endowed by Nature with the talents and qualities of mind necessary in a great reformer. And as a great reformer she will go down to posterity in the pages of history. When Sikandar Begam began to rule, the State contained many warlike men who desired nothing better than to live the same wild and exciting life their fathers had lived, and who regarded the new era of peace and order with anything but favourable eyes. To counterbalance this feeling it was necessary to introduce into the Assembly men who had a reverence for law and constituted authority—a delicate and difficult task. But with great firmness

she boldly faced the situation, and succeeded in bringing her refractory courtiers into subjection. The remodelling of the army was her first consideration, and what had been a turbulent and disorderly levy was transformed into an efficient and well-disciplined force. It was due to such wise changes as these that during the Mutiny in 1857 the Bhopal State remained in almost undisturbed tranquillity. When the military reforms were completed she turned her attention to the economic and social side of administration, and made a tour throughout her territories to learn the conditions of life in every district. Since the days of Akbar, no Indian ruler had ever undertaken such a task. Mr. Robert Hamilton, Agent for the Governor-General of Central India, in a despatch dated November 1854, writing in praise of the Begam's administration, said : " You are setting such an excellent example that it will be well for the State if the direction of its affairs continue in your hands." This pronouncement was called forth by the fact that at that time Sikandar Begam was acting as regent for her daughter, Nawab Shah Jahan Begam,<sup>1</sup> who was then young. In 1859, Sikandar Begam wrote to the Government of India, claiming her right to be made ruler. She stated that " In

<sup>1</sup> *An Account of my Life*, by H.H. Nawab Sultan Jahan Begam (p. 12).



accordance with the customs of Bhopal, which the Government were pledged to uphold," she, as the daughter of Nawab Kudsia Begam, ought to have been that ruler's successor. Contrary to this custom, however, she had been made to resign her claims in favour of her husband, and now that he was dead, she looked to the Government to restore to her her rights. In 1860 her claims were acknowledged, and she was placed on the throne, her daughter, who willingly retired in her mother's favour, being recognised as heir apparent.

Troublous times full of perplexities followed on Sikandar Begam's efforts of reform ; but like a skilful and experienced sailor navigating his almost sinking ship through a hurricane, she twice saved the State from impending ruin, and what her grandfather brought about by the sword she achieved by a policy of peace and justice. Her granddaughter, the Sultan Jahan Begam, to whom she was devoted and to whom she gave wise counsel in her earliest days, in a very interesting page of her book shows the wide knowledge she had of governing so as to ensure lasting peace and prosperity to her people. She writes : " When all reforms were completed and the wheels of the new administration had begun to turn smoothly

and regularly, Nawab Sikandar Begam turned her attention with more energy than ever to the interests of the Mustajirs and cultivators. Sympathy and affection characterised all her dealings with these people, and she was constantly searching for means to make them happy and contented with their lot. Whenever Mustajirs or Patels visited the capital city, she used to show them her palace and gardens, and provide them with every variety of amusement, while presents of toys and sweetmeats gladdened the hearts of their children. In the days of my childhood she used often to give me wise counsel, and I well remember how her first and most earnest injunction was always to the effect that 'The cultivators of our soil are our wealth : that we are able to rule and to live in state and luxury is owing to the labour and industry of these poor people. When you become the ruler of the State, look upon the fostering of this humble but useful class as your first and highest duty.' "

Sultan Jahan Begam goes on to say : " I have always respected this advice, and endeavoured to live in accordance with it, and the well-being of the cultivator and the protection of his rights is a first charge on the administration and the objects to which my highest efforts are directed."

Thus this far-sighted woman saw the necessity of training the young mind of the future ruler of Bhopal from her earliest days to realise her responsibilities, so that when her time came to govern the State, her mind would be fully equipped with knowledge, with a sense of duty to her country, and obligation to uphold at all cost its welfare and the great trust which her position would give her.

In 1860 Sikandar Begam attended a great Durbar, at which eighty-four Central Indian Chiefs were present. On entering the Durbar Hall at Akarabad, the famous capital of the Mogul Empire, she was met by the Viceroy who, after the usual formalities of welcome, said: "Lord Canning, on his return to London, spoke very highly of you to Her Majesty, who was greatly pleased, and said she would like to see you." She was then presented with a robe of honour as a mark of appreciation of her wise and loyal government, and in his speech the Viceroy said: "There are Chiefs in this Durbar who have acquired a reputation in this way: I may mention the Maharaja Sindhia and the Begam of Bhopal." Thus, not only was she pre-eminent among contemporary Chiefs for the wisdom of her rule and the loyalty of her friendship to the British Throne, but she

was the first Mahommedan ruler in India to perform the Haj. In those early days it was unusual for a Mahommedan woman to travel, but the Begam was determined to show her gratitude to *Almighty God for giving her strength and wisdom* to carry out her peaceful rule of reform, and she decided to make a pilgrimage to Mecca with this object.

Nawab Sikandar Begam lived for five years after her pilgrimage to Mecca, and then laid at the feet of her Creator the burden of regency and sovereignty which for thirty-three years she had faithfully borne.

Her granddaughter, whom she had loved so well and whose infant footsteps she had guided so carefully in the path that would best befit her for future responsibilities, writes : " Nawab Sikandar Begam, although born to rank and grandeur, lived simply, and was so averse from all forms of outward display, that she even forbade the erection of a dome over her grave. To high and low alike she extended the same affable courtesy. Although a woman, she possessed all the soldierly qualities that had distinguished her predecessors. Her personality inspired both love and respect. In a word, the enlightened ability of her administrations surpasses that of any other ruler whose lot it has

been to govern unaided in times as critical. To this day her memory is cherished with honour and affection in the hearts of the people of Bhopal, and the grey-haired among them who remember her days, delight to recount to their grandchildren stories of the fame, the power, the kindness and the charity of her whom they love to call Sikandar the Good. During the thirty-three years of her reign Bhopal was transformed into a new State. She saw the seed which her own hand had sown spring up and become a goodly tree, and God lengthened her days that she might taste the fruit thereof. May her descendants who dwell beneath its shade so tend it that its leaves may ever remain green and its fruits become more and more abundant." It was her pride to be known as the faithful feudatory of the Queen of England, and almost her last breath was spent in prayer for the happiness of Her Majesty, her family and Government.

Thus passed away a great woman and a great ruler. When the days of mourning were ended, her daughter Nawab Shah Jahan Begam took the reins of government into her hands. The Duke of Argyll, in his letter of condolence, said : "I am at the same time to express to you Her Majesty's assurance that she feels every

confidence that your Highness will administer the country under your charge with the wisdom and benevolence which characterised the government of the illustrious Princess whom you have succeeded."

### III. NAWAB SHAH JAHAN BEGAM

**W**HEN Nawab Shah Jahan Begam came to the throne, she found Bhopal a model State, and her reign had every prospect of being a peaceful one. Sikandar Begam, with her usual foresight and thoughtfulness, had selected a husband for her daughter of a better disposition and finer character than her own had been ; one who would not interfere in the affairs of State, had good blood in his veins, and consequently might be expected to be loyal to the British Government. Her choice fell upon Bakshi Baki Muhammad Khan, Nasrat-i-Jang (July 1855). He made a kind, considerate husband, and all went well until about sixteen months before Sikandar Begam's death, when her son-in-law was stricken with a fatal illness, and his early death was a great blow to her. She never ceased to deplore his loss or the loss sustained by her daughter. So when Nawab Shah Jahan Begam came to the throne she was a young widow of about thirty years of age,

and her only daughter, Sultan Jahan Begam, became heir apparent. The young Sultan Jahan Begam had lived a great deal with Sikandar Begam, who superintended her education. The death of her grandmother was an overwhelming grief to her, and she never forgot the wise teaching she received in her early years. Her birth in 1858, just after the Mutiny, was considered propitious, and peace has reigned in Bhopal ever since.

Then Nawab Shah Jahan Begam settled down to rule the State which had been brought into order by her illustrious mother. Everything went well until she contracted a second marriage with Sidik Hasan Khan, a man greatly inferior in every way to her first husband. He had been married before, and friction was caused by his putting himself and his children forward on every occasion, and by his making mischief between the Begam and her daughter, which caused great unhappiness and eventually led to an estrangement between them. Sultan Jahan Begam was betrothed to a boy selected by Sikandar Begam, who was a shrewd and keen judge of character and of human nature, and considered that, as heir apparent to the throne, it would be wise to select a youth for her whose training she herself could superintend, at the same time teaching him to sympathise with and



understand the ways of the people among whom his life would be passed. With this object she entered into correspondence with the Political Agent to the Governor-General, stating her wishes in the event of her death before the marriage took place. So far this remarkable woman did what she could to put her house in order, and succeeded in securing excellent husbands for her daughter and granddaughter. But the Nawab Shah Jahan's second marriage upset the course of events so carefully thought out, and Sidik Hasan Khan's behaviour caused grave difficulties. Indeed, his constant practice of pushing himself forward became so notorious that when, in 1875, King Edward (then Prince of Wales) visited India, there was a somewhat lengthy correspondence between Shah Jahan Begam and Lord Northbrook, the Governor-General, with regard to her visit to Calcutta. All the ruling Princes were invited to meet the Prince of Wales, and she among the number. But a question arose of her husband, Sidik Hasan Khan, representing her, "so that in fact he might occupy a position similar to that of former Nawabs who were actual rulers of the State." The plans for the advancement of Sidik Hasan Khan were impossible of fulfilment, and when they were frustrated by the Government of India, Shah Jahan Begam

insisted that her daughter, Sultan Jahan Begam, should accompany her as heir apparent, although she was in a very delicate state of health after the recent birth of her daughter, when she really ought not to have undertaken the journey to Calcutta. But the position was a difficult one on account of the jealousy and interference of Sidik Hasan Khan. The chief cause of estrangement between the mother and daughter was the second marriage of Shah Jahan. This was an act contrary to the custom of the Afghan race, and the offence was aggravated by the fact that she had chosen to marry a man of alien family and one who had laid deep plans of self-advancement. For some time the political officers of Bhopal overlooked his conduct, being desirous of deferring as much as possible to the Begam's wishes ; but at last his interference passed all reasonable limits. "His behaviour grew worse and worse, and he committed such acts as would assuredly have brought about the interference of the political officers, had it not been for the well-known loyalty of Shah Jahan Begam. So great, however, was Sidik Hasan Khan's influence over her, that she became absolutely blind to his intriguing nature. She would oppose him in nothing, and would never hear a word breathed against his character. That he

possessed learning and ability is beyond all question, but he abused both. His lot fell to him in fair ground, but neither to the State nor to the British Government did he manifest the smallest signs of gratitude.”<sup>1</sup> But Sidik Hasan Khan overreached himself at last. It was well known that the Begam acted in many ways under compulsion. It was not her nature to treat her daughter unkindly, and at length the British Government was obliged to take the matter up. A Durbar was held in Bhopal, when the Agent to the Governor-General arrived, accompanied by his staff and the Political Agent. After a brief and formal greeting, he turned to Shah Jahan Begam and said, “His Excellency the Viceroy has directed that Nawab Sidik Hasan Khan be deprived of his titles and his salute, and that he shall in future abstain from all interference, direct or indirect, in the affairs of State, and that in the event of his disregarding this order, a punishment of a much heavier kind will be dealt out to him.” Although the Begam felt keenly the disgrace of her husband, she knew that nothing had been done which cast any reflection on her character, nor was she in any way responsible for the evil that had arisen. She knew, nevertheless, that the order of the

<sup>1</sup> *An Account of my Life*, by H.H. Nawab Sultan Jahan Begam.

Government touched both her dignity and her honour. Sidik Hasan Khan had no one to thank for this punishment but himself.

Reform now began at once in Bhopal, and Colonel Ward, who was an able administrator and well acquainted with the Indian character, was appointed Political Officer at Bhopal. He gave his whole heart to the task before him, and soon gained the confidence of the people, for whom he showed the greatest possible consideration, and helped the Begam to put her State in order again. Among the few who viewed his administration with disapproval was Sidik Hasan Khan. But previous to her second marriage the excellence of the Begam's administration had been well known, and she was not held responsible for any disaster that had sprung up in the State, and she had lost none of the high qualities of heart and mind that had previously distinguished her. Therefore, when Sir Lepel Griffin visited Bhopal to see how things were shaping, he said : " On a happy occasion such as the present, I should not refer to a subject painful both to Her Highness and to myself, were it not that I wish to take this opportunity of proclaiming publicly Her Highness's wise and courageous resolution to put down every evil that is brought to her notice and to introduce such

reforms as will result in the permanent benefit of her subjects. She has appointed a Mahommedan gentleman of distinguished ability and high reputation to be the Minister of State, and has placed the control of all departments and offices into his hands. He will be subject to no interference, but will deal in all matters directly with Her Highness. I am sure that when the people of Bhopal become acquainted with this reform and its beneficial results they will congratulate themselves on their good fortune in living under the sway of a ruler who is ready to hear a complaint or to redress a wrong the moment she becomes aware of its existence."

On looking back to the middle of last century when, in 1868, in Central India there was almost an entire lack of railway communication (for then the Great Indian Peninsula Railway extended only as far as Khandwa, while the terminus on the northern side was Agra) and roads were deficient, it seems wonderful how government was carried on with such marked success ; and it is clear that it is to the rule of so many Begams in succession that Bhopal owes her great prosperity. These four illustrious ladies all realised that in a vast Continent like India the great question of food was of primary importance, and therefore the

State had to be self-supporting. There were no coastal towns to which ships could convey grain if there were a deficiency of crops ; and if the country were devastated by famine, its horrors would be greatly increased by the absence of means of communication which would render any effective system of relief an undertaking of the utmost difficulty. Therefore land cultivation was of primary importance ; irrigation was essential, and men could not cultivate, make roads and railways while their thoughts were distracted by war. So under the wise rule of the Begams peace *has prevailed*.

As soon as Shah Jahan Begam's consort was removed from interfering with her peaceful rule, and his martial aspirations definitely put an end to, she had time to consider the development of her State. It was a fortunate thing for the Province when, in 1868, Sir Henry Daly was appointed Agent to the Governor-General, for his energies and wise counsel helped the Begam in a most marked degree. It was through his influence and unceasing effort that the Chiefs of Central India began to realise how essential railway communication was to develop their territories. The Maharaja Holkar led the way by constructing a line from Khandwa to Indore, and his example was soon .

followed by Gwalior and Bhopal, and in less than ten years Sir Henry Daly had the satisfaction of seeing Central India traversed by a network of roads and railway lines, made and laid down at the expense of the Chiefs themselves. His personal influence was the keynote of his success.

After Shah Jahan Begam became a widow for the second time, she had more leisure to attend to literary pursuits, for she was both a scholar and an author with a wide knowledge of Oriental literature, and her *History of Bhopal* takes its place as a standard work. But besides this, she contributed a large number of books on various subjects to Indian lore ; her Court was frequented by men of learning from all parts of India, and she founded many schools for the study of Arabic and Persian. She also founded many scholarships for the encouragement of students. She was a very enlightened ruler and fully alive to the necessity of progression with the times. It was, however, uphill work, for many of the older men looked askance at progress and were suspicious of any form of education which went beyond teaching children to read and write and learn by rote from the old mouldy books which their old and mouldy teachers supplied. She was a far-seeing ruler and of an enlightenment rarely to be met with among

Mussulman ladies of her day in India. Gentle in disposition and refined in manner, she was generous and faithful to her word. During the famine in 1899 hundreds of lives were saved through her liberality. Even those who sought refuge in the State during that terrible time, were fed and cared for. Among her other great gifts was an elegant taste in architecture. She rivalled her namesake, the Emperor of Delhi. Indeed, when we consider what has been done in late years by the want of taste displayed in building by British enterprise in India, it is a relief to turn to a Native State and see that there, at all events, the 'Tajue-Masajid, though still incomplete, is a remarkable memorial of great beauty. When finished, it will rank among the finest buildings in the world. But besides the Mosque and palaces, Her Highness constructed many public works of permanent benefit to the State—hospitals, wells and tanks for the storage of water conferring a lasting boon on the rural population of her State.

During her reign three Viceroys visited Bhopal, and on each occasion the loyalty of the ruler was abundantly manifested, and the Government of India frequently acknowledged Her Highness's excellent qualities and high administrative ability. In his *Life of Lord Mayo*, Sir William Hunter,



after referring to the services of Nawab Sikandar Begam during the Mutiny, tells how this Begam died and "left her territory to a daughter worthy of her blood." "This Princess," he continues, "at the time of her accession was a widow of thirty years of age. She inherited her mother's firmness and good sense, with a rare aptitude for the duties of administration. Her Highness was created a Grand Commander of the Star of India, as the ruler of the State, except for the regrettable episode when her second husband obtained influence over her, to the great detriment of herself and her State. No woman could have shown that she was endowed with more noble qualities. It was impossible that injustice or oppression could emanate from her. The acts of oppression and the mischievous writing of Sidik Hasan Khan were outside her control. Whenever her opposition to his evil ways seriously alarmed him, he used the counter-threat of divorce, and against a Mahommedan lady of high rank he could wield no more powerful weapon. But the Government of India clearly saw through his manœuvres, did not hold her responsible, and showed its sincere sympathy in her difficult situation by the punishment they bestowed on Sidik Hasan Khan, who had grown rich through his

corrupt practices. Her Highness died at the age of sixty-seven, while the world was still mourning for Queen Victoria, who had always upheld her with the hand of Royal friendship.

Nawab Shah Jahan will long be remembered, not only as an able ruler but also as a loyal, virtuous lady, who surmounted the difficulties of the position she was called upon to fill with more than ordinary ability. And her daughter, Nawab Sultan Jahan Begam, reigned in her stead.

#### IV. H.H. NAWAB SULTAN JAHAN BEGAM, G.C.S.I., G.C.I.E.

**H**ER HIGHNESS is in England at the time of writing this brief sketch of her life (1926), and by reason of her remarkable gifts and outstanding personality she may well be placed among the wonderful women of our own times who are making history.

I first saw her at the great Delhi Durbar on January 1, 1903, when, robed from head to foot in draperies of dazzling silver gauze that glistened in the rays of the Indian sun, she took her place in the amphitheatre with the other Princes in that great assembly, and sat next to H.H. Sindhia, the ruler of Gwalior, with Orcha on her other side. After the message of the King-Emperor had been read, the Royal salute of a hundred and one guns fired, and the speech of Lord Curzon, the Viceroy, delivered, the ruling princes, in the order of their precedence, were presented to His Excellency. The Nizam of Hyderabad and the Gaekwar of Baroda were the first to testify to their devotion

to the British Crown. Then, when Her Highness advanced with a casket, containing an Address for presentation to the King-Emperor, and placed it on the dais at the foot of the throne, she was the central and most interesting figure in that vast assemblage of people of all creeds and of all shades of colour. The only woman ruler in Scinde, she had then reigned only eighteen months, but even during that short period she had established for herself an unique position and one of great strength among the Mussulman rulers of the world.

Bhopal, one of the Central Provinces of India, has a territory of about 7000 square miles and contains nearly a million inhabitants. South of Delhi and not far from the frontier of Gwalior, it holds a very important geographical position ; and the good influence of its women rulers for over three-quarters of a century had already been fully recognised by the British Government. So when, in June 1901, the time came for H.H. Nawab Sultan Jahan Begam to take up the reins of Government, she was welcomed by the Viceroy, Lord Curzon, as a worthy successor to the three former illustrious Begams. Indeed, on his arrival in India as Governor-General, Bhopal was the first Native State he officially visited.

H.H. Sultan Jahan Begam had had a difficult part to play during the lifetime of her mother, whose second marriage, as we have seen, aroused much family antagonism : but her own married life, as far as her relations with her husband were concerned, was happy. He had been selected on the advice of her grandmother, Sikandar Begam, and at the time of the marriage the Agent to the Governor-General asked the Begam " whether she could answer for it that Ahmed Ali Khan would not make trouble in the State." The Begam replied that, as far as she could judge, the manner and conduct of the bridegroom gave rise to no such apprehension. He had been brought up by her from before the age of seven, and had been educated under her special supervision. After the marriage was approved, strict rules were laid down to ensure that the Begam's Consort should in no way interfere in the affairs of State, and he faithfully observed those conditions during the whole of their married life, so that Sultan Jahan, while having a kind and considerate husband, was not hampered by constant interference.

There were great rejoicings at the birth of their first child, in October 1875, a daughter named Bilkis Jahan Begam. This event occurred about the time that King Edward (then Prince of Wales)

visited India, and when there was a flutter of excitement all over India in the endeavour to make him welcome. In 1876 a son was born, the first male child in the family for over seventy-six years. Later there was a second daughter and two more sons. To the everlasting grief of the Sultan Jahan Begam, she lost both her daughters, to whom she was devotedly attached, at an early age. Indeed, her early married life was overshadowed by domestic troubles, which weighed heavily on her affectionate warm heart, and profoundly affected her after-life. After the death of his sisters, the Begam seems to have devoted herself more especially to her youngest son. In her *Memories* she tells us that on the death of Shah Jahan Begam she took him with her to his grandmother's palace. Her Highness had been very greatly attached to her mother, but since her unfortunate second marriage had seen very little of her, although she had sent her eldest daughter to live with her in order that she might have the advantage of Shah Jahan Begam's guidance and training.

During these long unhappy years Nawab Sultan Jahan Begam did not neglect either the education and supervision of her children nor the cultivation of her own mind. She, like the Dowager Empress of China, her enlightened contemporary ruler,

was fond of painting, and her water-colour sketches of the garden of the Palace of Bhopal show vigour and originality. Like her mother, she could wield the pen, and the book she wrote in Persian, *An Account of my Life*, testifies to the great interest she took in every aspect of life in her own country as well as in the British Empire, and to her earnest endeavour to uphold loyal relations with the British Raj. Her first speech on ascending the throne, which she read at the Durbar, expressed her feelings so well that it deserves to be recorded : “ I ascend the Masnad of my ancestors to-day, and my grateful thanks are due to His Majesty the King-Emperor and his Viceroy in India, who have graciously recognised my right. You are all aware that in my veins runs the blood of those valiant predecessors of mine who earned distinction and renown by serving the British Crown in times of doubt, danger and difficulty, and that being so, nothing, I assure you, can be dearer to me than to walk in the footsteps of my forbears and keep the glory of their name untarnished.” In her book she mentions the flattering speech made in reply to hers by Colonel Meade, who had always been a friend as well as an adviser to her family, as was his father before him. “ It is doubly pleasant to me to be here to-day ;

first, because Your Highness's mother, Her Highness the Nawab Shah Jahan Begam, was similarly installed ruler of Bhopal by my father nearly thirty-three years ago, and secondly, because I was for so many years Political Agent in Bhopal and am personally acquainted with Your Highness and Your Highness's family. Your Highness is now installed upon the Masnad of your ancestors, and though you will not, I hope, have to act the part which fell to the lot of some of them, to repel the invaders at the gates of Bhopal, like Wazir Mohammad, or go down yourself among your troops as your grandmother, the illustrious Sikandar Begam, did in 1857, there will be for you, in the administration of your country, an ample field for those talents which I believe you have inherited from those rulers who have preceded you."

Then he goes on to say : " May Your Highness's age be prolonged like that of your great-grandmother the Qudisa Begam,<sup>1</sup> and may you be illustrious and honoured as your grandmother and mother, the Sikandar and Shah Jahan Begams." What higher tribute could be paid to the female rulers of Bhopal !

Just as the Begam was settling down to a regime of economy and the Land Revenue policy and was

<sup>1</sup> Qudisa (Kudsia) Begam lived to be eighty years of age.



organising her son's marriage festival, she received an unexpected and overwhelming blow in the sudden death of her husband. He had occasionally complained of pain in the region of the heart, but no cause for anxiety had been felt. This pain was more pronounced after exercise, but only five days before his death he said it was so much better that he hoped it would soon disappear. However, he passed calmly away in the early morning, when the sun had flushed the sky with silver and gold and just when the clouds of domestic unpleasantness that had so distressed him and the Begam during their married life had been lifted. They had been looking forward to a new era filled with happiness and one which offered opportunities for the use of his talents. "The cup was in his grasp, but before his lips could touch it, death overtook him and it was dashed to the ground."

It now became necessary for the Begam to bear her burden unaided and to make herself thoroughly acquainted with the various districts under her rule. She had been little more than six months on the throne, and as soon as the period of mourning for her husband was completed, she turned her attention to the urgent necessity for reform. In this she was unable to look for help to the older members of her family, for they had already

passed away, and the younger generation lacked both knowledge and experience. But a few old servants of the State still remained who were capable of enlightening her with regard to the usages and customs of the country. She was beset with cares and anxieties, and during those difficult days, she says, "It was a pleasure to me to renew his acquaintance.<sup>1</sup> I often spoke to him about my anxieties, he always listened to me with genuine sympathy, and I will never forget his words of comfort and encouragement. 'Begam Saheba,' he would say, 'Rome was not built in a day. With patience and perseverance you will conquer all difficulties. Go slow, look into everything carefully, think deep before you decide matters of importance, and God will help you.' Though beset with cares and anxieties, I persevered in what I considered to be the path of duty, and looked upon my work as a means of alleviating my sorrow." Nothing could show more clearly than this the terms of friendship that men in the Indian Political Service were on at that time with the rulers of the Native States. They were great "Sahibs" in those days, who had the interest of the country at heart, and they were trusted by the people, whom they studied and understood,

<sup>1</sup> Major Impey, the Political Agent.

and in return gained their confidence and respect.

The Great Durbar at Delhi was fixed for January 1, 1903, and all the princes, chiefs and nobles of the Native States were invited to attend for the purpose of celebrating the Coronation of Edward VII, Emperor of India. The Bhopal camp on this occasion was situated about four miles from Delhi, surrounded by camps of other rulers of Central India, and it was guarded by the Begam's troops. When she arrived at Delhi she was received at the station by a guard of honour, and after the salute was fired she was escorted by a detachment of Indian Cavalry to the Bhopal camp. Her youngest son, Hamidulla Khan, was then eight years of age, and attended the Chapters as one of the Viceroy's pages.

After Her Highness's return from the Durbar, she made a tour of the southern and eastern districts of her State, and always made a point of allowing womenfolk to come and see her. The wives of the Mustajirs and farmers she found very interesting and highly instructive, because she was able to hear at first-hand of their difficulties and manner of living. "The main object of my tour," she says, "being to acquaint myself with the real conditions of my people, I have long con-

versations with these simple-minded women, and I have noticed that sincere sympathy speedily evokes a cordial response and quickens their sense of attachment to me. It is a real pleasure to me to see them so cheerful, and often, after a hard day's work, I seek relaxation in a free conversation with them, when they would unburden their minds to me and describe happenings of everyday life which throw instructive sidelights on the work of administration." That she was an able administrator was proved by the fact that the Revenue Department was able to carry out the settlement of two districts in the very first year of her rule; the organisation of the Postal and Forestry Departments was overhauled, and new facilities provided for the convenience of her people. Nor were the Police and Judicial Departments forgotten, and police-stations were established in districts where they had been abolished by the late Vizir.

Her late Highness, Shah Jahan Begam, had sanctioned a number of scholarships with the view of popularising education, and she followed in her mother's footsteps and granted many fresh facilities for learning. English education was supplied in the High Schools and was in a highly efficient condition under the supervision of the Bhopal Agency. She also founded a medical school, and

took special care to introduce surgery into the curriculum. Her Highness was always most interested in housewifery as being of vital importance to women. She says : " In my judgment it is very necessary, and needlework and domestic economy need to be included in the curricula of all girls' schools."

H.H. Sultan Jahan Begam decided to make a pilgrimage to Mecca, and the journey there was evidently a great rest to her after her arduous duties of State. She speaks of her first sketches made on board ship off the coast of Arabia, and at Medina. She made a water-colour drawing of the town and the hill overlooking it, and, later of the harbour of Aden. While in Bombay, she devoted herself with great energy to the study of Art, and made many visits to the Museum and School of Art there in order to develop her talent. On her return to Bhopal she took the greatest interest in the supervision of the education of her youngest son.

Space will not permit of a description of the marriages of her two eldest sons nor of her interest in the well-being of their children, nor of the part she took in the Durbar when King George and Queen Mary visited India. Hers was a reign of unbroken hard work and high endeavour, :

reign of peace and prosperity for her people ; nor did she, during the lonely years of her widowhood, permit personal grief to interfere with what she considered to be her duty to the State. At the time of her accession her eldest son was proclaimed Heir Apparent, but his death and that of her second son, both in 1924, left her with only Hamidulla Khan, the youngest, to be her right hand and the comfort of her old age. Her grandsons were young and therefore, in her opinion, unequal to undertaking the responsibility of ruling in the event of her death. So, in September 1925 she came to England with her youngest son and his daughter, with the object of arranging with the British Government for his succession. When I saw her in her house in Portman Square, she was suffering much from rheumatism, and was in a very anxious state of mind ; she felt no longer able to carry on the very arduous work of governing the State of Bhopal, and was prepared to abdicate in favour of Hamidulla Khan. She also considered that his daughter would make the best Heir Apparent and future Begam.

Her appeal with regard to the succession was under consideration for some time, and during the months of waiting the Begam employed herself in learning to make pillow lace, and studied basket-

making, leather-work and other subjects suitable to teach the girls in her schools after her return to Bhopal.

At last the Begam's request was granted, and in May 1926 she handed over the reins of government to Hamidulla Khan, whom she had so carefully educated to carry on the fine traditions of her family. He had already had some experience in governing, for he had been his mother's confidant and adviser for some years ; he had also been Finance Minister and had held other important official positions. He is a fine sportsman, and the Prince of Wales stayed nearly a week with him during his Indian tour, when they played polo together.

For over three-quarters of a century Bhopal has been ruled by women, and it will seem strange to the people to have a man at the head of the State ; but doubtless the Begam's wisdom and advice will tide him over difficult places and plant his feet firmly on the path she herself has trodden, till the day comes when she will be but a memory in the hearts of her people, a memory of love and devotion to all around her. They will pray that her mantle will descend on the future young Begam in the days that are to come.

One characteristic was common to the four

Begams of Bhopal—their great anxiety to have the Heir Apparent trained from earliest youth to understand the great responsibility of her future office. Her entire instruction and education had this end in view, and it is evident that this influence was a very strong factor in moulding the minds of the young Begams. The very fact of their sex precluded them from leading a life of self-indulgence and excess, which was so often the undoing of the young men who were heirs to a throne, while bad influences and intrigue in court and zenana, and irresponsible pleasure-seeking companions completed their undoing. The outcome of all this was war and strife with their attendant evils and the almost inevitable ruin of their country.

It will be an interesting study to watch the progress and follow the career of the other Maharanees who are at present acting as regents and ruling Native States in India. At present none of them has held the supreme power long, but they are all women of personality, who have taken up their heavy burden seriously and who will face with courage whatever difficulties the future may have in store for them.



## H.H. THE MAHARANEE OF GWALIOR

**A**T the present time (1926) there are three Maharanees ruling as regents in India. Maharanee Chinkoo of Gwalior assumed the regency on the death of her husband who, it will be remembered, died recently in Paris on his way to England, where he was a well-known personage. The Maharajah was a good ruler and was devoted to the Maharanee. Unfortunately they had no children, which was a great grief and disappointment to them both. He was therefore urged by his mother and by his officers of State to contract a second marriage in the hope of obtaining an heir, and the daughter of a very influential Maharajah, the Gaekwar of Baroda, was suggested as a possible bride. This project, however, did not materialise, though the marriage would have been a very suitable one, for the Maharajah Scindia was also a powerful prince as well as an enlightened one, and the Princess had been educated in England. I met her when the

Gaekwar had a shoot in Scotland, and she asked me many questions about the Maharanee Chinkoo of Gwalior. It was easy to see that she did not like the idea of purdah, so it was not surprising to hear later that she had taken the law into her own hands and had insisted on marrying a son of the Maharajah of Cooch Behar, whose family no longer observed that custom.

Maharanee Chinkoo was a beautiful little thing when I knew her in India, shy and retiring, and very small and slender, with a light complexion, and it is strange to think of her now as ruler of the State of Gwalior. She and the Maharajah were entirely devoted to each other, and his early and unexpected death was an overwhelming grief to her. In reply to my note of sympathy, I received the following pathetic little letter, infinitely touching in its unaffected simplicity :

*"Jai Bilas,*  
*"July 2nd, 1925.*

"MY DEAR LADY GLOVER,

"It was a great relief to receive your card and the sympathetic message in my great sorrow, for which I offer you my cordial thanks, but, alas ! it is too great a shock for me to bear, and God alone can grant me the patience to bear this irreparable

loss. Even to imagine that short life ended at the age of 48 is tragic ! There are hundreds mourning for him as he was so very good and kind to all those he knew. May peace be on his departed and lamented soul.

“ Thanking you again for your kind thought,

“ Yours in great sorrow,

“ CHINKOO SCINDIA,

“ H.H. The Senior Maharani Sahiba  
Regent of Gwalior, C.I.”

The Maharajah never omitted to visit her quarters in the palace to tell her the latest news and to give her an account of the festivities which purdah prevented her from attending. These festivities were for the most part entertainments in honour of Royal personages and other distinguished British visitors to India at various times, and were carried out on a lavish scale, no money being spared to make them a success. I was once staying at the palace for a fortnight's tiger-shoot, when the New Year afforded an excuse for lavish hospitality ; balls and fancy-dress dances, gymkhanas, race meetings, reviews, filled up every hour of the day and most of the night, and it was almost with a sense of relief that one heard the band play the final notes of the National Anthem—the signal that

the guests were free to seek the retirement of their spacious tents and indulge in dreamless sleep, lulled by the faint musical tinkle of the elephant bells from the lines at no great distance away, until with the first streak of an Indian dawn the chirp of little birds and the patter of their tiny feet on the roof of the tent hailed a new-born day.

The Maharanee's garden at the palace was lovely, and so were the huge fern, palm and orchid houses. For all her retirement, and she was strictly purdah, she knew everything that went on. The Maharajah, speaking to me of this custom, said that he had no personal objection to his wife being unveiled, but it was the custom among high-caste natives, and that unless all the other Maharajahs agreed to abolish it, he did not feel that he could run counter to their social rules, even though he might wish it otherwise.

The Maharajah visited England on several occasions, and many Londoners must still remember his fine horsemanship. Once, when playing polo at Hurlingham, his pony ran away with him, and he vaulted from the saddle within half a yard of the terrified crowd of onlookers and brought the animal to an abrupt halt.

Though the government of his large State is now in the hands of a frail-looking little woman, it will

be none the less well ruled during the long majority of his only son, the present Maharajah. There are a number of European officials in the State Departments at Gwalior who will doubtless assist her in cases of difficulty ; but she will make few mistakes. She will not be cajoled by flattery nor influenced by men who have their own ends to serve. The State will always be her first consideration, and her one aim the peace and prosperity of her people.

## H.H. THE MAHARANEE OF COOCH BEHAR

IT is interesting to note that if the daughter of the Gaekwar of Baroda had married Scindia, she would have held the place of second Maharanee, and the senior Maharanee would still have been regent for her son. By marrying a son of the Maharajah of Cooch Behar, she became regent for her own son on the death of his father. Not having been brought up in purdah, she was a fitting mate for the grandson of that great preacher K  
Sen, who was so well known some years ago both in India and England. The little regent of Cooch Behar was brought up amid all the pomp and circumstance of a great Eastern Court. We read with wonder of the recent display at Baroda when the Gaekwar, who is a man of simple tastes, attained the fiftieth anniversary of his accession, or *Gadi*. We marvelled at the magnificence of every detail, and at a splendour that is usually associated with the India of a century ago.

The Gaekwar wore the famous State jewels—

priceless gems—diamonds the size of grapes, pearls that were heirlooms and for the wonder of their size might well have been the originals of those described in the *Arabian Nights*. We are told of a carpet ten feet by six with a diamond centre and corners woven from strings of pearls by order of a former ruler. This wonderful carpet took three years to make. The silver and gold guns of Baroda were also much in evidence during the celebrations.

But the most picturesque of all the trappings of State were those of the elephants. The great creatures were themselves “painted and bedizened, decked out in gold and silver.” They were decorated with painted designs in which tigers and peacocks were predominant: they carried howdahs of gold and silver and ivory, and wore jewelled ear-rings, anklets and collars. One huge beast carried the Gaekwar to his durbars: the others followed in the procession. Thousands of people prostrated themselves before the ruler who, fifty years previously, had been a peasant boy tending cattle in the fields. ✓ Romance is not yet dead in India.

The regents of Gwalior and Cooch Behar have not held the reins of government long, but they are both possessed of great personality, and



H.H. THE MAHARANI OF COOH BLHAR

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doubtless one day history will record their names on the roll of illustrious ladies whose rule in peace and honour was of lasting benefit to their country.

## H.H. THE MAHARANEE OF TRAVANCORE

**T**HERE is yet another regent in India at the present day—the Maharanee of Travancore. She, too, has only recently assumed her high office, but during the short time she has held it she has shown that her rule will be a wise one and a blessing to her people.

The State she governs is not so well known as that of Cooch Behar, for the latter is easily accessible from Calcutta, and travellers more frequently visit Simla, Darjeling and other Himalayan resorts in the East, and are therefore less familiar with this western Native State. But Travancore is one of the “beauty spots” of India. It is a narrow strip of country, nowhere more than fifty miles wide which lies between the Western Ghats and the Arabian Sea. All down the coast there are beautiful lagoons, and the rainfall is so plentiful that the country is like a green park, where rice, coconuts, coffee, tea, rubber and pepper are grown. There are also forests of fine timber, such as teak and

rosewood. Legend says that King Solomon obtained his ivory, apes and peacocks from Travancore. It certainly could supply elephants, and apes and peacocks also, and the presence of a race of Jews who have been domiciled there for many generations gives colour to the tradition. All the more striking is it to find in a strictly Hindu State an indigenous episcopal Christian Church that has been there for centuries, and we are told that "the population of the country is five millions, of whom Christians number one and a quarter million." This may account for the fact that several heads of State Departments are Christians. "It is worthy of mention that the Head of the Medical Department is a lady belonging to the ancient Syrian Church, who is the first lady of this community to graduate at Madras, while in another is a member of the Committee of the World Student Christian Federation. The Buchanan Institution, founded in 1890, was the first training school for women teachers in the State; three hundred have already gone out from it. Till this year the training was in the hands of an Indian master. We now have a mistress at the head." From this it will be seen that H.H. Setu Lakohmy Bai, the regent, who was born in November 1895, is ruling a progressive territory. The law of

succession in the female line still persists. The Ranee's sons have no right to the throne ; they are merely subjects. But the laws of succession are so intricate that it is impossible to do more than refer to them here. As the Ranees have higher social rank than their husbands, the men were until recently not even allowed to sit with them or to travel with them, but were expected to follow their wives in separate carriages, and they lived in separate palaces. But the present regent has more modern ideas. She often travels with her husband and little daughter, and by doing so has gained the admiration of Europeans and natives alike. She has also won the affection and respect of her subjects during her short reign on account of her justice and benevolence, which are extended to all alike, no matter what may be their caste or religion.

Sufficient has been said about women who have ruled or are ruling Native States in India, and of the courage with which they face difficult problems. Passing from that great Empire with its teeming millions, so varied in caste, religion and language, and so wedded to ancient custom and tradition, one must perforce stop a moment to reflect on the astonishing fact that the whole is held together and kept from disintegration by the British Raj—just a few white men scattered among the



H.H. THE MAHARANEE OF TRAVANCORE



## THE MAHARANEE OF TRAVANCORE III

millions. Speaking of this great problem, a Maharajah once said to me : " It is not that we like the British Raj, but we prefer it to the Raj of any other nation ; if it were taken away, we should all be fighting one another in a fortnight." That race of barbarians whose sole aim is the destruction of all that is better than themselves is not extinct : their fanatical folly, which would destroy what wiser and saner men built up with care in the past, could only result in arresting the progress of evolution and civilisation, or even in bringing back those deadly days of war, rapine and murder, when the lives of men were held to be of little value. Indeed, nowhere is life held so cheaply as in the Far East. Really ?

Take China, for example. When one considers the complex conditions of existence there, and the age-old religion of the Chinese with its ancestor-worship, it seems almost incredible that any woman could have ruled the country with so much vigour and success as the late Dowager Empress did for the long span of fifty years.





CHINA



## THE DOWAGER EMPRESS

(1)

**T**HE late Dowager Empress of China, Yehonala, called also "The Old Buddha" and Tzu Hsi, whom her subjects loved for her very defects, was by no means the first woman who had ruled China. Her great predecessor, the notorious Empress Wu-How of the T'ang Dynasty (A.D. 618-907), was perhaps the most dominating woman in all Chinese history, though she was regarded as a usurper on account of her sex.

The history of the late Empress reads like a romance, so various were the ups and downs of her long and eventful life. Born in November 1835 of the family of Yehonala, one of the oldest Manchu clans, she could trace descent in the direct line from Prince Yankunw, whose daughter married, in 1588, Nurhachu, the founder of the Manchu Dynasty. Yehonala, whose life was destined to influence countless millions of people, was three times regent of China and its autocratic ruler for

more than half a century. Many absurd and unfounded stories have been circulated in recent times about her and her clan, attributing to the Empress humble and not altogether worthy antecedents, which undoubtedly owe their origin to palace intrigue, envy and malice. It would not be possible for any woman to escape calumny who had such a strong personality and possessed such bewitching charm and attraction as did Yehonala.

The story of her early years is one of poverty and struggle. Her father was a Government official at Ningkuo and, dying young, left a widow with a large family and no resources. They had not even sufficient funds to enable them to return to their home in Peking after his death ; but in their extremity the widow and children were unexpectedly helped on their way by a traveller who was moved to pity by their destitution. He little knew that he was assisting the future Empress who, twenty-five years later, received him in audience at Peking, and, remembering his former kindness to her family, raised him from his knees and thanked him with every expression of gratitude for his timely aid in their distress. Her mother, who survived her husband for many years, lived in the family house in Pewter Lane, Peking,

not far from the Legation quarter, and when her daughter became Empress Mother she was accorded the rank of Imperial Duchess. This lady seems to have been distinguished for intelligence, even among members of her own clan of clever people, and it was doubtless owing to her ability and good sense that her daughter's education was allowed to follow the usual classical course. But Yehonala's exceptional alertness and activity of mind led her also into other paths and enabled her to rise superior to the mere study of the lives of her ancestors and to turn her attention to contemporary men and affairs. She took a real pleasure in art and learned to paint skilfully and to write verses, and at the age of sixteen she had mastered the Five Classics in Manchu and Chinese, and had studied the historical records of twenty-four dynasties. She seems to have had a definite presentiment of the greatness of her destiny, doubtless fostered by her love of power and her strength of will, and encouraged by that eagerness for knowledge which is "the beginning of wisdom and the secret of power." During the time that her character was being formed she seems to have had few companions, but among her playmates was a young kinsman, Jung Lu by name, who was destined in after years to play a

prominent part in many a crisis in her career. During the Boxer rising, it was he who won over the military commanders (with one exception) and put a stop to the bombardment of the Legations. His last memorial, written to the Empress just before his death in 1903, is a pathetic record. "With my last breath," he said, "I now entreat Your Majesty vigorously to continue in the introduction of reforms, so that gradually our Middle Kingdom may attain to a condition as prosperous as that of the great States of Europe and Japan." Jung Lu seems to have been a loyal adviser to the Empress, though she did not always take his advice; indeed, her self-reliance was such that she usually carried out her own ideas unaided, and herein lay her strength. She knew what she wanted and made straight for her objective

To make the most of her opportunities was characteristic of Yehonala; and when, in 1850, the Emperor Tao-Kuang died and his son, a youth of nineteen, ascended the throne, an unexpected chance came to her which she by no means neglected. A decree was issued, commanding all beautiful Manchu maidens of suitable age to present themselves for selection for the Emperor's harem. Among those who repaired to the office

of the Imperial Household were Mayanga, a daughter of Sakota, and Yehonala. About sixty of these eligible young ladies passed before the widow of the late Emperor for selection for her son, and out of that number twenty-eight found favour. These she divided into four classes of Imperial concubines. Sakota became a "p'in" and Yehonala a "k'nei" or "honourable person," and were admitted into the "Forbidden City." Yehonala was treated with honour and respect and a special serving-woman was deputed to wait upon her, but she was not allowed to visit her mother in Pewter Lane. Indeed, it would appear that it was not till January 1857, nine months after the birth of her son, the heir to the throne, that the Emperor gave her special permission to do so. What an excitement there must have been in Pewter Lane when, in the early morning, a palace eunuch came to announce that the "Concubine Yi," as she was now called, was coming to visit her mother at midday! Everyone turned out to see the eunuch in the yellow-draped chair, and later the courtyard was crowded in anticipation of the arrival of the mother of the Heir Apparent. Yehonala seemed to be unaffected by all the Court splendour, and was as unspoilt and affectionate as ever, showing the keenest interest in the affairs



of her family and particularly in the education of her sisters. She was full of her old vivacity, just as she was before she left home, and asked innumerable questions at the banquet her mother provided in her honour. Then late in the afternoon the eunuch appeared to escort her back to the palace. On leaving, she expressed sincere regret that her life must be cut off from that of her family, but hoped that some day the Emperor might permit her to come again to visit them.

It is difficult for a Western mind to grasp all the subtleties and intricacies of Oriental Court life, nor need we go into details here. Suffice it to say that in all domestic matters the widow of the last deceased Emperor exercised supreme authority and determined the rank of the concubines, many of whom were more or less her personal attendants. Besides these ladies, there were some two thousand female Manchus employed as handmaidens and indoor servants under the control of the eunuchs. When Sakota was selected by the Dowager Empress as a "p'in," she took precedence of Yehonala; but she had no children, so that when Yehonala's son was born, the latter became a very prominent person as mother of the Heir Apparent. She had from the very first established herself firmly in

the favour of the widow of Tao-Kuang, and through her influence, and also thanks to her own personal charm, she soon became first favourite with her dissolute lord, and her position at the palace was firmly assured. She had always made it her practice to read and advise on all memorials from the provinces, and she used her growing influence with the Emperor to get Tseng Kuo-Fan appointed Commander-in-Chief and to raise funds, aided by General Gordon, for the repression of the Taiping rebellion, showing even at so early an age that quick decision at a moment of national danger and that breadth of mind which always distinguished her.

When the widow of Tao-Kuang died, Yehonala was raised to the rank of "p'in," while Sakota became Empress Consort. The sovereign was weak and debauched, and in no way capable of inspiring either affection or loyalty in his people. He did not possess any of those scholarly tastes which had so distinguished his predecessors, and it was not to be wondered at that rebellions and dissensions broke out all over the Empire. The birth of the son put fresh heart into the people, but soon after this event the Emperor was stricken with paralysis and, by virtue of her position as mother of the Heir Apparent and, thanks to her

own masterful character, Yehonala became the real ruler of China, and at this very early age gave advice on foreign affairs and on international questions, though indeed she knew very little about either. Her colleague, the Empress Consort, never interfered in public affairs and took no interest in politics. In actual rank Yehonala had only risen to the position of concubine of the first grade ; but the Empire had come to depend on her leadership, which was remarkable in a country where no woman was supposed to rule—and she was only twenty-two years of age at that time. She still went by the name of Yehonala, her family or clan name, but was usually described as the “Yi concubine,” and later as co-regent and Empress-Mother ; Tzu Hsi, and many other honours were added, but the mass of the people called her either the Empress Dowager or the Old Buddha—more frequently the latter towards the end of her reign. The Emperor was in failing health ; cowardly and undecided at all times, he took the advice of the last person who tried to influence him, and the only one capable of a firm and courageous stand against the intrigues that surrounded the Court was the concubine Yi. She soon grasped the situation and tried to frustrate the constant conspiracies ; consequently the

courtiers and others tried to poison the mind of the Emperor against her, accusing her of misconduct. Finally he consented to have her infant son, the Heir Apparent, removed from her care. At the same time the conspirators accused the Emperor's brother, Prince Kung, of treachery and of plotting with foreigners against the Throne. There was also another plot to massacre all the Europeans in the city and to put to death or imprison for life the Emperor's brothers. But here the first of many unforeseen obstacles presented itself. The far-seeing Yehonala managed to possess herself of the special official seal, without which no edict announcing a new ruler could be issued. Its affixture was a proof of the validity of succession. This seal was always in the personal possession of the ruling Emperor. Without it the usurpers could do nothing.

The spring of 1860 saw stirring times in China. The north was invaded by the allied forces of England and France. The history of the cause and progress of this invasion are too well known to need any description in these pages, but the part that the concubine Yi played in it may be of interest as illustrating her dominant personality. Alarming rumours of all kinds were widespread, and great uneasiness was felt in Peking. The

Emperor was seriously ill, and it was known that he wished to leave the city ; but flight in the face of danger was foreign to the character of a courageous woman like Yehonala, and for a time she prevailed upon him to remain. " How," said she, " could the barbarians be expected to spare the city if the sacred chariot had fled, leaving unprotected the tutelary shrines and the altars of the gods ? " She begged him to remember that episode in the Chow Dynasty, when the Son of Heaven fled his capital, " his head covered with dust and forced to take refuge with the feudatory princes. The Chinese people have always regarded this as a humiliating event in the history of their country, but the present flight of the Court appears more humiliating still." However, she was overruled, and after notices had been issued by the Allies (in very bad Chinese) that Peking would be bombarded, " and all inhabitants who did not wish to share the fate of the city had better remove themselves to a safe distance," the Sacred Chariot moved out and reached Johol in safety ; but His Majesty was greatly alarmed, and issued a decree expressing regret " for his failure to commit suicide on the approach of the invaders." A famous edict was published about this time, too long, however, to quote here. Taking into account

its vigorous tone, which was in keeping with all the amazingly penned edicts which were written in later years by the Dowager Empress, it is impossible to believe that it could have been written by the vacillating Emperor himself.

After the Court reached Johol, the advisers of the Emperor were inclined to favour a continuance of the war, but Prince Kung was statesman enough to realise that the only chance for China lay in submission, and treaties of peace were concluded with the British and French. "Hereafter amity is to exist between our nations in perpetuity and the various conditions of the treaty are to be strictly observed by all."

At the time of the Emperor's death, which occurred soon after peace was signed, Yehonala found herself in a very difficult position. Though surrounded by intrigue, she managed to despatch a courier secretly to Prince Kung at Peking, urging him to send with all haste a detachment of the Banner Corps to which her clan belonged. Events were moving quickly ; a decree was issued announcing the succession of her son, then a child of five years of age, but containing no mention of her either as mother of the new king or as regent. Yehonala, however, was already recognised as the master-mind of the Forbidden City. A Manchu who

accompanied the Court in its flight to Johol, when describing his experience, lays stress upon her personal charm and unfailing courage, and on her great popularity with the Imperial Guards, which led to her eventual triumph. She was in possession of the seal of legitimate succession. Prince Yi claimed that he was the legally appointed Chief Regent, and that the Empress had no power to divest him of authority during the minority of the new Emperor, and forbade anyone to attend audiences without his express permission. "We shall see about that," said Yehonala, and forthwith gave orders to the attendant guards to place the three regents under arrest. When the funeral cortège of the late Emperor reached the Forbidden City on its journey from Johol, the streets were lined with troops faithful to her cause. Her triumph was complete. "Forthwith the Empress proceeded to regularise her position by issuing the following decree, which bore the Great Seal of 'Lawfully Transmitted Authority.'"<sup>1</sup> It is a masterpiece of diplomatic writing, and the Dowager Empress owed much of her power throughout her long reign to the great facility of her pen. Nothing was forgotten or overlooked. She spoke of the

<sup>1</sup> This document is too long to give *in extenso*. See *China Under the Empress Dowager*, by T. O. P. Bland and E. Backhouse.

interests of the State as her first concern, and deferred to the wishes of her people, even with regard to the "manner in which the Empresses shall administer the Government as regents." "Let this also be discussed and a Memorial submitted in reference to future procedure." She also dealt with conspirators, and another decree issued on the following day, treated of matters that "give evidence of that acquisitive faculty, that tendency to accumulate property and to safeguard it with housewifely thrift which distinguished her to the end. She caused inventories of property to be taken on seeing the aspirants to the Imperial throne using the Imperial porcelain and furniture for their own purposes, even refusing to hand over certain articles that were required by the Empress. It was therefore no wonder that she safeguarded the treasures in the palace, which she considered the property of the Imperial Crown."

As soon as the Proclamation of the new reign was made by edict, the Dowager Empress issued one of her characteristic decrees. In it she says: "Our assumption of the Regency was utterly contrary to our wishes, but we have complied with the urgent request of our Princes and Ministers, because we realise that it is essential that there should be higher authority to whom they



may refer. So soon as ever the Emperor shall have completed his education, we shall take no further part in the Government, which will then naturally revert to the system prescribed by all dynastic tradition. Our sincere reluctance in assuming direction of affairs must be manifest to all. Our officials are expected loyally to assist us in the arduous task we have undertaken." Following this decree was one in the name of the boy Emperor, thanking their Majesties and promising that as soon as he came of age he would endeavour by dutiful administration to prove his gratitude.

Yehonala now became Tzu Hsi and the Empress Consort Tzu An—one being Empress of the Eastern and the other the Empress of the Western Palace. At the audiences of the Grand Council it was the custom for the two Empresses to sit on a raised dais, each on a separate throne, in front of which was suspended a yellow silk curtain. They were in the habit of peeping through this curtain to see if they could detect any signs of disrespect in the demeanour of the officials in audience, and it was at one of these audiences in the fourth year of her reign that Tzu Hsi noticed Prince Kung, whom she suspected of intriguing against her, suddenly rise from his knees, contrary to all

rules of etiquette, which were originally instituted to guard the Sovereign against any sudden attack. The guards rushed in, and he was ordered to leave the presence at once. This led to his dismissal from office till a further decree reinstated him in his position of Adviser to the Government and restored him to the Grand Council, when he was told to "strive to requite our kindness and display greater self-control in the performance of your duty."

The Empress Dowager's secret of success as a ruler was the fact that she recognised and appreciated merit wherever she found it. She had the highest respect for the judgment of her military commander Tseng Kuo-Fan and also for that of her kinsman Jung Lu, who always stood high in her affectionate esteem. It would be tedious to enter into details of the different rebellions and difficulties the Dowager Empress had to face from time to time. They concern the history of the country ; but the part that she took in private life throws more light on her character at this time. A young widow, full of life and personal magnetism, now firmly established on the throne, she used the talents of her favourite eunuch, An Te-hai, to provide elaborate Court pageants and theatrical entertainments, which were her favourite

amusements. This man was a good actor himself and prepossessing in appearance. He became her favourite attendant and emissary, and later shared her ambitious hopes and plans, with great advantage to himself. Doubtless it became known that the Dowager Empress patronised the stage very extensively, and criticism may have reached her ears, for in a decree she speaks of a Memorial from the Censor Chia To, in which he states "that it has come to his knowledge that those who perform theatricals in the Imperial Household have had their costumes made of tribute silks and satin taken from the Imperial storehouse. He asserts that they perform daily before the Throne and regularly receive largesse to the amount of thousands of taels. He asks that these practices be forbidden and discontinued forthwith, in order that all tendency towards vicious courses may be checked." In reply to this accusation, the decree continues, "We seized the opportunity in this same edict (of the previous year) to abolish once for all the custom of bringing actors to the Palace to be made eunuchs, holding it to be wise, while His Majesty is still a minor, that everything that might tend in any way to lead him into paths of extravagance and dissipation should be firmly nipped in the bud. The Censor's present Memorial has therefore filled

us with real amazement." She continues : "Nevertheless in our remote seclusion of the palace, it is inevitable that we should be kept in ignorance of much that goes on, so that it is just possible there may be some grounds for these reports. It may be that certain evil-disposed eunuchs have been committing irregularities beyond the Palace precincts, and if so, such conduct must be stopped at all cost. We hereby command that drastic measures be taken to deal with the offenders at once." But it would seem that the Censor had good cause to accuse the eunuchs of this extravagance and evil influence. They had wormed their way into the confidence of the Throne with their protestations of loyalty, and had been the principal cause of all the disasters that had overtaken previous dynasties. In this case the chief eunuch, An Te-hai, came to an untimely end. His illegal mission and bad behaviour in the Province of Shantung gave Prince Kung the longed-for opportunity to cause his downfall and execution.

"Her stage was a large one, built out from a main building and open on three sides, having a roofed excrescence for a larger 'house.' On the stage of this many-sided room she played her part—her many parts—while below and all round sat the Royal Household. There was space for many

hundreds, and it must have been a wonderful sight with all the ladies in their large black satin, beribboned Manchu head-dresses stuffed full of pendants and pins and combs and flowers.

“The drama was a source of great interest to the Dowager, whose real life has been one of drama.”<sup>1</sup>

Besides her love for theatricals, the Empress found great amusement in sketching, and was no mean artist or judge of painting. She had good taste, and appreciated all beautiful objects in porcelain and jade and in the carvings of her country. Like many of the women rulers of the world, Tzu Hsi made expeditions to various parts of her Empire to see for herself how her orders for buildings, road-making, and other important affairs, were being carried out, and to receive in audience those who wished to present Memorials. In a country where provincial tribute and commissions on official appointments were rife, she doubtless was to some extent a check on abuses that were the prevailing custom. Considering that the Empress had no contact with the so-called barbarians of the world outside her Empire, not even with the Legations in Peking, one turns with astonishment to the study of this remarkable woman. “She was a classical scholar and wrote

<sup>1</sup> *An Adventurous Journey*, by Mrs. Alec Tweedie.

poems. Her great distinctions were force and charm and her great social *flair*. She possessed exquisite courtesy, a gift inherited from the Manchus. She could grasp a situation quickly. She spoke no English and always had two interpreters. She never addressed the interpreter, however, because she felt that it disturbed the magnetic current by saying, 'Please say so and so.' She always spoke direct to the guests, looking them in the face, and individually made her remarks to them. She was a Buddhist and very deeply religious woman. She had her own oratory at the Summer Palace and prayed there every day.'<sup>1</sup> The state of affairs revealed by decrees and memorials must compel unstinted admiration for a mind so obviously superior to its environment, and for a personality which dominated the destinies of men and the foreign relations of her country for half a century.

<sup>1</sup> *An Adventurous Journey*, by Mrs. Alec Tweedie.

## THE DOWAGER EMPRESS

(II)

**H**IS MAJESTY'S education having been completed, it was proposed, in November 1872, to hand over the reins of government to his keeping. He had now attained his seventeenth year, and had developed an autocratic, imperious temper. He was encouraged in this attitude by his wife, A Lu-Te, whom his mother had chosen for him. From the outset he had been an undutiful son, and neither he nor his young wife appeared to see the danger of opposing the will of the Dowager Empress, nor to realise that to live in peace with her meant complete submission to her will. The first trouble arose from the Emperor's refusal to submit State documents for her inspection. The Dowager Empress no doubt remembered the fact that if an heir to the throne were born she herself would be relegated to a position of obscurity. Tzu Hsi knew of the youthful Emperor's dissipated habits, and when these resulted in a serious illness, she allowed it

to work havoc with his delicate constitution. Indeed, report had it that a respected member of the Imperial household, seeing that His Majesty's licentiousness would assuredly bring about his early death, urged that the bad influence exercised over him by his eunuchs should be removed and that greater care should be taken of him in the future. But he only incurred the displeasure of both the Empress and the Emperor himself, and he was compelled to resign his post. The Emperor would return from his orgies long after the hour fixed for audience with the high officers of State ; he was often mixed up in drunken brawls with the lowest dregs of the people, and so undermined his health that he could offer no resistance to the disease which caused his early death. In 1874 he contracted smallpox, and on January 12, 1875, he died, and the Dowager Empress was at once asked to assume control of the Government.

The Emperor's death without issue would have made plain sailing for the Dowager Empress, but the Empress Consort A Lu-Te was *enceinte* and therefore an heir was to be expected. A fresh crop of intrigues now sprang up in the palace, in the council chamber and in the Western Palace of the Forbidden City. The Dowager Empress took the matter into her own hands, and before the



funeral of the Emperor, she sent for the infant son of her sister, who arrived at the palace with his mother and several nurses, and was at once taken into the Hall to kow-tow to his predecessor, who was lying there in state, thus passing over the claims of the potential posthumous son. The infant Emperor was understood to express dutiful thanks for the promise that he should become ruling Emperor as soon as his education was completed; until then the Dowager Empress would govern the country. The charm of her personality, her quickness and the convincing directness of her methods overcame all opposition to this arrangement. The new Emperor, being the nephew of Tzu Hsi, was, like herself, a direct lineal descendant of the last great Manchu Emperor.

The Empress Regent was about to confer a title on the late Emperor's widow when her death was reported; some said that she committed suicide and others asserted that she had met her death through foul play. Be that as it may, the path to power was cleared for Tzu Hsi. The first Memorial she received after assuming the regency was on the subject of the succession, and ended with the following request: "With your approval, therefore, we would ask that the Princes and Ministers be now required to draw up an

unchangeable pledge as to the succession to the throne, which should be proclaimed for the information of all your Majesty's subjects."

Tzu Hsi seemed to be getting irritable on the subject of the succession, or it may be that her conscience pricked her, for she showed temper by the issue of a very short, sharp reply: "We have already issued an absolutely clear decree on this subject," she said, "providing an heir to the late Emperor, and the decree has been published all over the Empire. The Memorialist's present request gives evidence of unspeakable audacity and an inveterate habit of fault-finding, which has greatly enraged us, so that we hereby convey to him a stern rebuke."

Life in the Forbidden City settled down once more into its old routine under the regency of the Empresses of the Eastern and Western Palaces. Tzu An would never become a rival to the Dowager Empress, for she had no personality; but the boy Emperor showed a decided preference for her, which made for ill-feeling and friction between the two ladies, and a serious quarrel took place in 1881 on the subject of the influence of the chief eunuch and of his arrogant manners. The quarrel was very bitter, and it was believed at the time that Tzu Hsi brought about the death of her colleague,

which occurred about this time. But the atmosphere of Oriental Courts is charged with such stories, incapable alike of proof or disproof. In the edict Tzu An wrote just before her death, she spoke of having been stricken on the previous day with slight illness, "and now unexpectedly I have had a most dangerous relapse. At seven o'clock this evening I became completely confused in mind, and now all hope of recovery would appear to be in vain. I am forty-five years of age, and for close on twenty years have held the high position of Regent of the Empire." It would not seem that Tzu Hsi had any hand in the drafting of this document, for she speaks in the decree of having been careful to set a good example of thrift and sobriety in the Palace and of having steadily discountenanced all pomp and vain display in Court ceremonies, which looks like a hit at the Dowager Empress for her extravagance.

After the death of Tzu An, the Dowager Empress became sole Regent. In 1887, Tzu Hsi was fifty-five years of age, and for nearly thirty had been ruler of the Celestial Empire. Kuang Hsu had now completed his seventeenth year, but it was not until February 1889 that the Dowager Empress definitely handed the reins of government into his hands.

On the marriage of the Emperor to the daughter of her brother, Duke Kuei Hsiang, the Dowager Empress retired to her comfortable retreat at the foot of the hills which shelter Peking. She remained in retirement for about ten years, but during that time she contrived to keep close watch on the doings of the Emperor and also to protect her own interests. It would appear that the Empress, her favourite niece, was personally unattractive, and from the first was not on good terms with the Emperor, who showed preference for the society of his two senior concubines. By the Emperor's orders the Summer Palace had been entirely rebuilt with funds taken from the Navy Department and other Government Boards since 1889, and was just completed in time for the festivities that were to take place in honour of the Old Buddha's sixtieth birthday. Most of the high provincial authorities were summoned to Peking, not only to take part in the display but also to pay for it. The festivities were to be carried out on a splendid scale, and the officials were invited to contribute twenty-five per cent of their salary as a birthday offering to the Old Buddha. Triumphant arches were to be erected along the Imperial highway extending between the Summer Palace and Peking, a distance of five miles. But when the

news came of the disasters which had overtaken the Chinese forces in the war with Japan, all arrangements for the celebration were cancelled by a decree which she issued in the name of the Emperor. She said : " Although the date of my birthday is drawing close, how could I have the heart at such a time to delight my senses with revelries or to receive from my subjects congratulations which could only be sincere if we had won a glorious victory ? " To which the Emperor added a filial remark to the effect that " Her Majesty had acted in accordance with the admirable virtue which always distinguished her, and that in spite of his own wishes he was bound reverently to obey her orders in the matter." There is no doubt that the ignominious defeat by the Japanese which so affected the prestige of the Chinese in general and of the Manchu Dynasty in particular, was the cause of the violent agitation in the Southern Provinces, which led in its turn to the Boxer rising. The Dowager Empress showed her sagacity by disclaiming any responsibility for this defeat and by refraining from expressing her opinion on the decision taken by the Emperor. She knew that the Navy had been starved for years in order to provide funds for the rebuilding of the Summer Palace, a fact that was probably unknown to some

of the Imperial advisers. There were incriminations all round ; the Viceroy, Li Hung Chang, was blamed for advising the Court to maintain China's suzerainty over Corea, but to the last moment he hesitated to make any statement ; for while he was in favour of suppressing the Corean insurrection, he was opposed to any steps that might lead to war with Japan. Foreigners blamed him for making war on Japan, the Chinese attacked him for betraying his country to the Japanese and for selling Manchuria to Russia, while a censor blamed the Empress and the Viceroy for the disasters in China. Tzu Hsi felt very deeply her country's defeat by the Japanese, a race which, as the Chinese historians never failed to remind their readers, had learnt their first civilisation and culture from the Celestials.

This disastrous war caused great ill-feeling between the Dowager Empress and the Emperor. It divided the Palace into opposition camps. The Empress Consort became openly alienated from her husband, and when the Empress Mother died in 1896 the last bond of reconciliation was cut. But though relations were strained, the Emperor kept up a show of dutiful respect, and called on the Dowager Empress at the Summer Palace three or four times a month. Tzu Hsi employed her

time there in writing verses and painting pictures, an art in which she excelled, but she kept herself fully informed about everything that was taking place in the Emperor's Palace. The Imperial tutor, who had superintended his education since he was five years of age, was a native of Kiangsu, which is said to be the birthplace of the greatest scholars of China. He hated the Manchus as well as the Chinese of the metropolitan provinces, whom he considered narrow-minded, and thus strife was soon stirred up between the north and south. The reform movement of 1898 divided the country, one faction holding with tenacity to the Old Buddha and the other party to His Majesty's Court. The Emperor issued a decree which brought matters to a crisis. In it he said: "Of late years many of our Ministers have advocated a policy of reform, and we have accordingly issued Decrees which provide for the institution of special examinations in political economy, for the abolition of useless troops and the old form of examination for military degrees, as well as for founding Colleges." These Decrees upset the old classical essay system, and among the Manchus the consternation was very great. They felt that for the first time in history their privileges were in danger and that fundamentals were being challenged. Tzu Hsi

now began to assert herself, and intriguing Ministers used their influence on both sides, and sent innumerable memorials to the Emperor.

But before long another innovation occurred, more startling than all the others. It was suggested that the Empress Dowager and the Emperor should travel by train to Tientsin. Tzu Hsi was much pleased, for she enjoyed riding on the miniature railway in the Winter Palace, but the proprieties of the Manchus were shocked. In the next Decree it was suggested that the Empress Dowager and the Emperor should travel abroad, beginning with Japan and continuing with a tour in Europe: that a number of useless posts should be abolished, and that Government offices and their sinecures that were a burden on the State should be closed. The country was in a ferment. Nearly all the high officials holding office proceeded to the Summer Palace, and told the Empress that the only hope of saving the Empire lay with her, and begged her to consent to resume supreme power. The Old Buddha bade them wait. Realising the situation, the reform party advised the Emperor to seize the person of the Dowager Empress and confine her for the rest of her life on a certain island in the Winter Palace lake. The Emperor foolishly agreed to do so, but decided not to carry out the plan



until after the return of the Court from Tientsin. But he underrated the old Buddha's powers of resource and mistook her inaction for indecision. He continued sending out his reform decrees, including one ordering the teaching of European languages in public schools. By August 1898 the Empress Dowager had won over the reactionary party. "By all means," she said, "let the army be reformed; the Decree is sensible enough, but His Majesty is in too great a hurry, and I suspect him of cherishing some deep design. You will await a further audience with him and then receive my instructions." She sent for the Emperor and informed him that he must have Kiang Yu Wei, the reformer, placed under arrest for speaking disrespectfully of her private life and morals.

Then the Emperor sent for Yuan Shih Kai and, seated on his great lacquered dragon throne, little knowing that it was for the last time, told him the details of the work he was about to entrust to him. He was to go to Tientsin and put Yung Lu, the Viceroy, to death; then return with the troops under his command and seize and imprison the Empress Dowager. He gave him a small dagger as a symbol of authority, and bade him return with all haste. Yuan promised to carry out his instructions in silence, but when he reached

Tientsin he went at once to see Yung Lu. These two men had taken the oath of brotherhood in their youth, and Yuan recalled this fact to the Viceroy's memory. He added that out of affection for him and from loyalty to the Old Buddha he was betraying the Emperor's scheme, and showed him His Majesty's decree.

Yung Lu started at once for the Summer Palace with the Emperor's decree in his hand, and boldly disregarding all etiquette, entered the Empress's presence. "Sanctuary, Your Majesty," he exclaimed, falling on his knees. Then he unfolded the plot. The Empress grasped the situation at once. She directed him to summon the leaders of the Conservative party and high officials to an immediate audience in the Lake Palace. On their knees the assembled officials begged her to resume the supreme command and besought her to save the Empire.

Next morning the Emperor was seized by the guards and eunuchs and taken to the Palace on the Lake, where he was told that the Empress would visit him later. On arrival, she informed him that she had decided to spare his life and, for the present, to allow him to retain his throne. He would, however, be kept under strict observation, and every word he uttered would be reported to

her. The Pearl concubine, the only one of the Emperor's wives with whom he was on good terms, knelt to the Empress to implore her to spare the Emperor further reproaches and was angrily dismissed, and the Empress Consort, who was hardly on speaking terms with His Majesty, was commanded to remain with him. He was allowed to see no one but the eunuchs in attendance. The Old Buddha's resentment against him was amply justified, for not only did he owe his throne to her, but he was a blood relation, and had first sworn loyalty to her and then plotted against her life.

Though the Emperor's life was slowly ebbing, he lived twenty-three months on the "Ocean Terrace," and with almost his last breath he sent a message to his brothers telling them to be revenged on the authors of his undoing.

The Emperor had had his chance. In the enthusiasm of youth and carried away by the new ideas of reform, he had played his game and lost. Tzu Hsi had given her nephew a free hand and he had steered the ship of State into troublous waters. And now his reign was over. He had neither the strength of will nor the diplomatic resources of the Empress Dowager; neither had he her facile pen, the charm of which had power to change her opponents into supporters.

So once more she settled down to her work of government with the old zest by no means diminished by age. On the whole, the sympathy of the people seems to have been with the Old Buddha. She had a way of guiding public opinion and directing it into fruitful channels without antagonising popular prejudice. Stress was laid on the late Emperor's lack of filial piety, as evidenced by his having plotted against his aged relative, an act unpardonable in the eyes of followers of Confucius. They considered that His Majesty had shown want of control and judgment, and that the Empress was fully justified in the steps she had taken to safeguard herself.

It is difficult to understand the Oriental mind and its outlook on life, so imbued is it with the spirit of the past, with ritual, and with superstitions absolutely unthinkable by the practical and progressive European. No doubt the foreign Legations looked with dismay at the turn events had taken and deplored the end of the Emperor's reforms ; but little can be really known of the inner workings of a country like China, where reliable information is not easily obtained. But matters soon settled down into their old routine, and people in the Celestial City were glad to know that the Old Buddha was once more at the helm.

In June 1898, the British Minister at Peking was impressed with the idea that "the Court had at last thoroughly recognised a real need for radical reform," and later in the same year the Marquess of Salisbury "was seriously informed by Sir Claude Macdonald that the wives of the foreign Representatives, seven in all, had been received in audience by the Empress Dowager on the anniversary of her sixty-fourth birthday," and that Her Majesty "made a most favourable impression, both by the personal interest she took in all her guests and by her courteous amiability." The Old Buddha was a good judge of character; like all great rulers, she knew instinctively how to handle each individual. No one ever saw the strong iron hand that was hidden in the soft velvet glove. Her graceful and courteously worded Decrees appealed to her people through the way she deferred to their wishes, pointing out the advantages to be derived from her suggestions and stating that they were in accordance with precedent and the ruling of her ancestors. Even when she ordered the decapitation of a Minister, she carefully explained that the order was given for the good of the Empire and was not actuated by any private wish of her own. Her Ministers would indeed have been shrewd if they could have worked

on her vanity. It was said that one of them was summarily dismissed from Court because he tried to flatter her. She was fond of dress and adornment, and was doubtless fully aware of her personal attractions, which in her younger days must have greatly helped her position at Court. But the influence she always exerted in the Palace was of far more lasting a character, growing always with her reputation for tender-hearted kindness. This was especially the opinion of the peasantry and of the merchant class. She dealt with many of the crying evils existing among them and with the hardships caused by the interminable delays and heavy costs inflicted upon those who were obliged to seek justice at the hands of Chinese officials. She knew her people well and understood the exact form of diplomacy to be used with them while changing the old order of things to the new ; and she also fully realised that while it might be quite safe to give a well-trained old horse his head, it would mean disaster to both steed and rider if a young, spirited, untrained animal were driven with a slack rein.

The story of the Boxer movement has often been told. It was the outcome of the enrolment of militia in the provinces, who came into conflict with the Imperial troops. During the rising, and

in spite of the outcry and fighting against the "barbarians," it is said that the Old Buddha sent presents to the Legations of water-melons, vegetables, wines and ice, and expressed a wish that Prince Ching should visit the foreign Ministers. She wished to "save the face," as the Chinese express it. She was finally obliged to flee from the Palace in disguise; but this flight was afterwards referred to as a "tour of inspection." In a penitential decree the following occurs: "Last summer the Boxers sowed the seeds of rebellion, which led to our being involved in war with friendly Powers, thereafter our capital being thrown into a state of great disorder. We escorted the Empress Dowager, our mother, on a progress of inspection throughout the Western Provinces. To Prince Ching and to our Grand Secretary, Li Hung Chang, we entrusted full powers, and bade them negotiate with the foreign Ministers for the cessation of hostilities and a Treaty of Peace. . . . There are ignorant persons who believe that the recent crisis was partly caused by our Government's support of the Boxers. They must have overlooked our reiterated Decrees of the 5th and 6th Moons, that the Boxers should be exterminated and the Christians protected." Later on it continues: "that to the Throne's strenuous efforts is really

due the avoidance of such dreadful catastrophe, and that the gifts of wine and water-melons to the besieged Legations is an indication of Her Majesty's benevolent intention." This Edict coincides with the date of the Dowager Empress's acceptance of the conditions imposed by the Powers in Peking. Prince Tuan's son was now the Heir-Apparent, solemnly appointed to succeed. He was ill-mannered and wild. "Once again the Old Buddha showed that the sacred laws of succession were less than a strong woman's will." She considered him quite unfit to rule, as proved by his disgraceful conduct. So she proceeded to depose him and to occupy the Throne "until a suitable candidate could be found."

On returning to the Court at Peking in January 1902, Her Majesty proclaimed her intention of receiving the Ministers' wives in person, intimating "that she cherished most pleasant memories of past friendly intercourse with them." When she arrived at Peking, the Empress stood on the platform at the end of her carriage. "Quite a number of foreigners are here, I see," she said, and crossed her hands, bowing according to the etiquette observed by Chinese ladies. Without giving any impression of fussiness, this remarkable woman left nothing to chance, her unquestioned authority



penetrating even to the servants' quarters, and she by no means disdained to concern herself with the minor details of her household. She held the destinies of China in her hands for over forty years, and now unflinchingly announced a change of policy which no other ruler of the Dynasty could have proclaimed without causing disaster or civil war. Even the most bigoted of her subjects were won over by her subtle suggestions. She issued a long Decree.<sup>1</sup> In it she spoke of the plans of reform of 1897 and 1898 and the crisis of the Boxer rebellion ; and after referring to her study of European methods of reform, went on to say : " Ignoring our real needs, we have so far taken nothing from Europe but externals." Now things would be different ; and so masterly were her methods of dealing with the situation that even the most bigoted Confucianists were mollified, and during the six years which followed her return from exile, she not only realised herself the immense superiority of the material forces of the Western world, but she proved to her people the advantage of adopting them, which meant a widespread reform that anyone less masterful and less popular than Tzu Hsi could never have effected. " It

<sup>1</sup> See *China Under the Empress Dowager*, by T. O. P. Bland and E. Backhouse.

was only her exceptional position and authority that enabled her to introduce the machinery for the establishment of constitutional government based on the Japanese model."

In the summer of 1908 the Dowager Empress began to show signs of failing health, and her unhappy nephew too was suffering from an incurable disease. It was therefore necessary to make arrangements for a successor to the Throne. The Old Buddha looked quietly about her and finally selected the infant son of Prince Chun, born in 1906 ; but she did not make her decision known till the day of the Emperor's death, some weeks later.

She had recovered from a stroke of paralysis, and preparations had been made at the Winter Palace for celebrating her seventy-third birthday, and the Dalai Lama was to be her guest. The Empress Dowager spent the afternoon of her birthday in witnessing a masquerade, appearing in the costume of the Goddess of Mercy. Attended by the Imperial Princesses and all the Court in fancy dress, she picnicked on the lake, and appeared to be in the highest spirits. Then in the glorious September moonlight a wonderful Feast of Lanterns was held upon one of the three lakes in the Palace grounds, each about the size of the

Serpentine in Kensington Gardens. Lanterns hung all the way round, pink paper lotus (water-lily) flowers with lighted candles inside. Each reflected in the water the big Imperial Hall of the Imperial Family, a blaze of colour and light. The flat-bottomed boats or Imperial barges were gaily decorated with satin hangings and wondrous pagan embroideries, as when visitors were present at the Dowager Empress's water-parties. There were large lanterns of wood scattered about the lake, and paper swans, geese and ducks skilfully made with lighted candles inside, floated about on the lake. A fairyland indeed in the beautiful clear moonlight of an almost tropical night, and one of the most beautiful sights of the peaceful days of China.

On the following day the Dowager Empress attended to affairs of State as usual ; but she had caught a chill and was far from well. On hearing of her illness the Dalai Lama presented her with an image of Buddha. This miracle-working image was quickly despatched to her mausoleum on the hill, and she was greatly assured by the cheerful prognostications of the giver. But she told the Lama that she wished him to return to Tibet.

Some days later His Majesty had a serious relapse, and sent to inform the Empress Dowager, who

was also unable to leave her room, of his serious condition, and directed his Consort to say that he was dying and hoped that she would appoint an heir. Weak as she was at the time, and unfit to take part in official ceremonies, with unconquerable courage she mounted the throne and from it spoke with her usual clearness and authority, announcing that the time had come to nominate an Heir to the Throne and advising the selection of Prince Chun's infant son. When the Emperor was told of her selection, he said, "Would it not have been better to nominate an adult? No doubt, however, the Empress knows best."

Next day Kuang-Hsu passed over in the presence of the Empress Dowager, his Consorts and attendants. The excitement of the week was too much for the Old Buddha in her enfeebled state of health, and after giving several Decrees to her people and attending to the formalities incidental to the funeral of the Emperor, she was seized with a fainting fit, and when she recovered, knew that her end was near. Nothing daunted, she appointed Prince Chun as Regent to the infant Pwyu, his son, in succession to herself. "Being seized of a mortal sickness and being without hope of recovery," she wrote, "I now order that henceforward the Government of the Empire shall be

entirely in the hands of the Regent. Nevertheless, should there arise any question of vital importance in regard to which the Empress Dowager's opinion is desirable, the Regent shall apply in person to her for instructions and act accordingly." The ingenious wording of this Decree was intended to afford the new Empress Dowager, her niece, and like herself of the Yehonala clan, an opportunity for intervention in any special crisis. After looking over this long and carefully thought-out Decree and correcting it, she observed, "She had nothing to regret in her life, and could only wish that it might have lasted for many more years." She then proceeded to bid an affectionate farewell to her numerous attendants, who were overcome by real grief.

Thus passed away one of the most remarkable women in modern history. She understood, and was loved by, the people she ruled, and her forcefulness and influence might have eventually led them through the thorny paths of reform to peace. The chaotic condition of present-day China as a Republic leads one to think that the fifty years of rule of the Dowager Empress was a remarkable feat. Since her death, her prestige and hold on the imagination of the people have grown rather than diminished, as is clearly shown by the offerings

and sacrifices they bring to her shrine. It is believed that her "spirit still watches over the Forbidden City and the affairs of her people, who firmly believe that it will in due time guide the nation to a happy issue out of all its afflictions."



**JAPAN**





## EMPRESS JINGO KOGU

**J**INGO KOGU, or Divine Merit, was the granddaughter of the Emperor Waka-Yamato-Neko Ohohihi of Japan. She was made Empress in the second year of the reign of Emperor Naka-Tsu-Hiko, when she was very young, and so beautiful, intelligent and shrewd that her father pondered in awestruck wonder on the gifts God had bestowed on her. This remarkable woman, afterwards known as the Grand Empress, was born in A.D. 169 and died in A.D. 269, in her hundred and first year, and was buried at Saki.

The whole history of her reign, gathered as it is from legends and early manuscripts, is so interspersed with romance and fiction that it is extremely difficult to form a true estimate of her character ; but it is clear that she was a great power in the land, a great personality, and a great fighter. An account of Jingo Kogu was published some little time ago in one of the numbers of the Japan Society's Magazine, and we learn from this source that the Empress commanded Takechi and other

of her generals "to lead an army of several tens of thousands of men to attack Prince Oshikuma." Whereupon the General and his colleagues, having taken picked men, went out by way of Yamashiro as far as Uji, where they encamped north of the river. Prince Oshikuma, we are told, came out and offered battle, and to encourage his men sang verses in a loud voice. There were no shells screaming terror in those days to prevent his words from being heard. The Empress's General deluded the Prince by saying, "I am not greedy to possess the Empire. Why should I contend with thee in battle? I pray thee let us both cut our bowstrings, fling away our weapons and be in harmony together. Then mayest thou, my Lord the Prince, mount to the heavenly office and sit in peace, making high thy pillow and wielding at thy will ten thousand appliances."

Prince Oshikuma believed the deluding words, and ordered all his troops to cut their bowstrings and ungird their weapons and cast them into the river. Upon this General Takechi commanded the three divisions of his army to produce their spare bowstrings, to string their bows again and advance across the river. When the Prince became aware of this manœuvre, he said, "We have been deceived and have no spare weapon. How shall

we be able to fight ? ” So he withdrew his troops and beat a retreat.

It would be tiresome and unprofitable to read all the details of the wars that tradition relates took place in this reign : the story is too long and too complicated. But Empress Jingo has left her impress on Japanese history, and in tradition and legend she stands out as one of the world's greatest women. This fighting Empress may possibly—I do not know—be the Jingo referred to in the old British fighting song,

“ We don't want to fight,  
But, by Jingo, if we do,  
We've got the ships, we've got the men,  
We've got the money, too ! ”

Japan has altered much since Empress Jingo's day of bows and arrows, but neither time nor Western civilisation have changed the beauty of this cheery, flower-bedecked country, a veritable paradise for travellers, who revel in its wealth of sunshine and in its gorgeous scenery. Japan is quite unlike her neighbour China, for while the latter lives in the past the former is intent on progress, both present and future. Thus she has made strides in development, and is taking a strong position among the nations. These laughter-loving little people, quick to learn, have

studied with infinite care and deep observation the different forms of government in the Western world and copied what appeared to them to be good. They have built warships after the British pattern and officered them on British lines, and their navy has become one to reckon with ; so has their trade, which has grown rapidly of late years, owing to the natural industry of their large population, the individual efforts of each of whom helped to bring about the final result.

**PALMYRA**



## QUEEN ZENOBIA

WE pass from the Far East and Japanese activities to the third century A.D., when the great city of Palmyra was surrounded by a blaze of glory and ruled over by the most wondrous of Oriental Queens. The story of Zenobia and her humiliation at the hands of a man who, even at that period of the world's history, might have laid claim to some degree of the civilisation of the Western world, illustrates the innate cruelty of the human heart when filled with blood-lust and love of conquest and plunder.

Her romantic story came to my mind recently when reading a modern novel. I was struck by a description of a hotel where people employed at the Persian oil springs went for rest and change, a cool retreat in the hills, looking down over a wide expanse of plain. "Past the vast mass of the Temple of the Sun and past a few mud-built huts till they reached the plains where dead Palmyra lay in beauty beneath the moon. Here the Arch of Triumph framed the milky sky; there the



long rows of columns marched into the desert, pale ivory in the moonlight. Here they saw the acanthus leaf, carved with cunning by long-dead hands, there the oak and acorn, or the vine, and everywhere elaborate decorations, testifying to the once great wealth of this city of the desert Queen." But no name was mentioned by which this ruler could be identified. Ancient historians as a general rule give the names of kings and rulers, but however great the queens may have been, however strong their personality, however excellent their rule, because they are women they are seldom mentioned by name. Thus the great Zenobia, who ruled from A.D. 267 to 273, and who was described as "that peerless woman, whose regal attributes and personal accomplishments were as remarkable as the brilliancy of her reign"<sup>1</sup> is seldom mentioned by name. The city (the Tadmor of King Solomon) "came on the stage of history in the blaze of glory that surrounded the most wondrous of Oriental Kings, and after many centuries of splendid obscurity, quitted it in the meteoric glare that accompanied the most wondrous of Oriental Queens."

The triumphal arch referred to above consisted of three large arches, from which ran four rows of

<sup>1</sup> *Palmyra and Zenobia*, by the Rev. Dr. Wright. 1895.



QUEEN ZENOBIA



columns. Near this spot, and on both sides of the Arch, are splendid ruins, which local tradition says are the remains of the Palace of the Lady Zenobia and of the Judgment Hall. There are inscriptions on two of these columns ; one (and a statue) to Septimus Odenatus, the other to his wife " Septima Zenobia the illustrious and pious Queen." Zenobia, after her husband's death, fought, and was victorious over, the Roman legions, and reigned as Queen of the East from the Nile to the Euphrates. Palmyra must have been a splendid city in the zenith of its glory, when the victorious troops returned laden with spoils of Oriental Kings and marched in glittering array through the long colonnades and beneath the statues of illustrious Palmyrenes ; or when the gilded chariot of Zenobia flashed through those corridors surrounded by her martial courtiers, or " when with bare arms and helmet on head, with all the pomp of real or mimic war, she sallied forth on her shining Arab to review and harangue her warriors on the sandy plain."

The history of Zenobia is linked inseparably, by both fact and fiction, with Palmyra and " deserves at our hands a more detailed notice than we have given so far. The very name of Tadmor recalls Solomon and Zenobia, and both are associated

in the Oriental mind with these wonderful ruins ; but while Solomon is accredited with superhuman power, the Lady Zenobia is renowned for her womanly graces and accomplishments as well as for her vast learning and martial bearing."

The Roman Empire, we are told, "came into contact with Britain and Palmyra about the same time ; twelve years before Julius Cæsar landed at Dover. Mark Antony on a plundering expedition made a raid on Palmyra, but the Palmyrenes fled with their treasure beyond the Euphrates and the Roman robber found the city denuded of its wealth. He also met a line of Palmyrene archers before whom his cavalry recoiled." Zenobia claimed kinship with Cleopatra, "but the claim was advanced on her conquest of Egypt, as if to strengthen her title to the throne of the Ptolemies. There may, however, be some grounds for Zenobia's pretensions, or she would not have pressed them in the face of Roman historians and scholars like Longinus, and her perfect command of the Egyptian tongue indicated a close connection with the country."

In the year A.D. 271 Aurelian, a soldier of fortune who had risen from the lowest ranks, was called by the army to be Emperor of the Romans. Zenobia had already undertaken the Egyptian

campaign in the cause of Rome, and had fought and conquered in the name of Rome ; but she held the country in her own name and as part of the kingdom of Palmyra. But when Aurelian had reduced matters in Europe to a satisfactory condition as far as he was concerned, he had time to turn his attention to the great Queen. Then came a time of struggle between East and West. " Aurelian had risen to power by courage, strength, and attention to discipline. He lacked culture, refinement and education, but he had built up a Roman army which had become an irresistible engine of war. With this engine he hoped to crush Zenobia." At the approach of danger that refined and cultured woman paused in her literary and artistic pursuits, and called together the sons of the desert who had planted her standard on the banks of the Nile and established her authority on the plains of the Seleucidæ ; swift dromedaries sped forth from Palmyra in all directions to warn the Bedawin of the approaching foe. The Roman name had no terror for the free men of the desert. In several encounters they annihilated the famous legions and even the Parthians, who had destroyed a Roman army and held in slavery a Roman Emperor. Zenobia's summons warned them of a common danger and roused them to repel a common foe." Zenobia's

call to arms was nobly responded to, and in a few days her troops came together with a light heart, eager to be led against Western troops. Zenobia, however, did not despise her enemy, but with a prudence equal to her courage began her operations at once. In this crisis she was more than a general. She visited each of her camps daily and fully shared the privations and fatigues of her men. The charm of her sympathy and beauty bound them to her with undying loyalty. "Her martial bearing and knowledge of war kindled their military ardour and enthusiastic confidence." The description of one of the battles in which she took part makes an interesting page of history. "Though Zenobia issued her commands through her General, Zabdas, she was seen by all her troops galloping over the plains with a glittering helmet on her head, and with arms bare, encouraging the hesitating, cheering on the wavering, and calling on the broken and dispirited to make a stand against the advancing Romans. But the day was irretrievably lost by the impetuous valour of the heavy cavalry. It was the Balaclava Charge on a large scale, with no red line to fall back upon. Seeing that resistance was no longer possible, Zenobia collected the remnants of her scattered army and returned to Antioch." "The battle

was fierce, long and desperate. The Palmyrene cavalry had to avenge the overthrow of their companions at Antioch, and they almost annihilated the Roman cavalry. The battle was, however, finally decided by the staying power of the Roman veterans who had borne the Eagles to victory in Britain and among the Allemanni and ferocious Goths." Aurelian, Emperor of the Roman world, wrote a letter to the Queen, in which he said : " I charge you to surrender on your lives being spared and you, O Zenobia, may spend your life in some spot where I shall place you in pursuance of the distinguished sentence of the Senate : your gems, your silver, gold, silk, horses, camels being given up to the Roman treasury." In reply to that letter Zenobia said : " Thou askest me to surrender as if thou wert ignorant that Queen Cleopatra chose rather to perish than to survive her indignity." On receipt of her letter the efforts of the besiegers were redoubled. From the Castle Mountain the Queen watched the Eastern horizon with straining eyes to catch a glimpse of the Persian succour which she expected. Towards the West she saw, among the billowy hills that stretched away to snow-clad Lebanon, only long strings of camels, bearing supplies to her foes. Aurelian had intercepted the Persians and bought



over the Armenians and Saracens. Zenobia made a great dash for freedom. She held a Council of War with her Ministers and Generals, and sallied forth on a dark night mounted on a swift she-camel. "As the last green streak of the Euphrates appeared in the distance, the dromedary increased its speed to reach water. Already Zenobia felt safe. But during the last half-hour of her journey a little cloud of dust had been following her track, and seemed to be gaining upon her. After a time it appeared that the cloud of dust was raised by a band of pursuing Romans. Many a time the desert had resounded to the yells of pursuers and pursued, but never since or before in a crisis when so much depended on the result of the race. Swiftly and silently Zenobia's camel approached the great river. Zenobia slipped from it to the ground, and ran panting like a gazelle to a boat that was prepared to take her to the other side. She sprang into the boat. Whether by entanglement or treachery will never now be known, but a moment's delay was sufficient to turn the balance in favour of the West and to alter the destiny of the East. With foaming horses the Romans came thundering to the bank of the river and seized the heroic Queen just as she was putting off." Palmyra fell with the Queen under whose rule it had reached

highest renown. It has been left on record that the soldiers clamoured for the death of the Queen, but Aurelian reserved for her his Roman triumph, and hurried home with her and the spoils of war. He also brought a number of Palmyrene nobles to grace his triumph, but in crossing the Straits between Byzantium and Chalcedon all the captives were drowned except Zenobia and her two sons.

The triumph of the conqueror when he reached Rome was the grandest ever enjoyed by any Roman Emperor. He rode in a magnificent chariot which he had taken from the King of the Goths. Twenty elephants marched before him, two hundred wild animals, including tigers and elks, and eight hundred gladiators accompanied by all the treasures of Zenobia and the spoils of Palmyra. But the greatest interest was centred in the captive Queen. Every window and balcony was crowded to see her, the Oriental woman who had dared to contend with Rome for supremacy. "There was in the annals of perverted patriotism and abused power no more brutal spectacle than the triumph of great Imperial Rome over that humbled and helpless Queen." But the crowd raised shouts of protest when they saw the graceful and beautiful lady tottering through the streets

on foot in front of her own chariot, her hands bound with golden chains and a golden chain round her neck, golden rings round her ankles and slaves supporting her as, laden with jewellery, she staggered forward in front of the conqueror." There does not appear to be any certain knowledge of Zenobia's career subsequent to her defeat. One tradition has it that she was allowed to live in peace at Tivoli and that she died there. But the Roman historian Zosimus says that she mourned over the utter destruction of Palmyra and her ruined fortunes, and, refusing all food, languished and died.

## ASSYRIA



## QUEEN SEMIRAMIS

**I**T has come down to us through ancient legends that in very remote times there were many kings in Asia, but the story of their lives was not worth recording. But at length there arose an Assyrian king who was a mighty man of war, King Ninus, who founded a vast Empire and made many conquests. The whole of Asia Minor to the Mediterranean, besides the lands round the Black and Caspian Seas and even parts of Southern Russia, became subject to him. He built a magnificent capital city which he called Nineveh, referred to later in the Book of Jonah as "that great city." But great as were his achievements and wide-flung as was his rule, they were as nothing when compared with the prowess of Semiramis, his Queen.

The story of Semiramis is so surrounded with legend that it is very difficult to separate truth from fiction ; but tradition has it that she was of humble Syrian origin, deserted by her parents and found by a shepherd, who took her to his master,

Simmas, the overseer of the Royal flocks. Even as a child she was famed for her beauty : to see her was to love her. One day the Royal Governor, Onnes, came upon her by accident, lost his heart to her and married her. She was as wise and brave as she was beautiful. Finally, the King himself met her and he too succumbed to her fatal charm and stole her from her husband, who killed himself for grief at her loss. Semiramis thus became Ninus's Queen. She seems to have exerted a great influence over that monarch, who remained devoted to her to the end of his life, and on his death, after a reign of fifty-two years, he bequeathed the whole of his Empire to her, to the exclusion of their son Ninyas. By doing so, the old King appears to have shown great wisdom for, magnificent as was his record, that of Semiramis surpassed it in brilliancy. Not only was she successful in war, but she had a noble genius for what was still more important—the governing of her subjects in time of peace. From conquest she turned her attention to founding, or as some say rebuilding, the great city of Babylon with its mighty walls and towers and its wonderful bridge over the Euphrates. She also built a Royal castle in Egbatana and supplied it with water brought down from mountain lakes through an aqueduct.

There is in the Yagros highlands, near Bagistana, a high, almost perpendicular rock-mountain. Semiramis had the face of it carefully levelled and covered with sculpture, representing her with a hundred of her bodyguard. We are told that her warlike expeditions surpassed those of the King, for she not only conquered Egypt, Ethiopia and part of Lybia, but led a campaign against India and got as far as the River Indus, where she was defeated. But the Queen's haughty spirit was unaffected by this disaster. She returned to her dominions to enjoy a life of pleasure and luxury with as great a zest as she had shown in work for her country, in leading her armies to battle, or in the pursuit of art in her intervals of leisure.

Semiramis is described as being a woman of such unearthly beauty that at sight of her men became her slaves. Her Court was brilliant beyond description. Her son Ninyas became tired of holding an obscure position, became jealous of his mother and plotted against her. The Queen discovered the conspiracy and remembered an old prophecy which foretold that "she was to be gathered to the Immortals and receive divine honour when her son rebelled against her." To frustrate this, she made over her Empire to him, and ordered all her nobles and generals to swear.



allegiance to him. But the jealousy of Ninyas was not to be appeased, and eventually Semiramis suffered death at his hands. Thus the prophecy came true.

Ninyas proved to be a weak and contemptible monarch, a contrast in every way to his energetic and ambitious mother. He spent his time in the harem in effeminate idleness, and never appeared in public. The country soon fell into the hands of military and other high officials, and eventually became subject to the Medes, for "all his successors lived in the same inglorious way, and not one of them left a name or a deed worthy to be recorded." Queen Semiramis was the last worthy ruler of Assyria.<sup>1</sup>

In the history of the downfall of Assyria after

<sup>1</sup> Among the many Assyrian legends the story of a beautiful girl named Sherin is worth recording. We are told that one day she went with other maidens to bathe in a stream, and it so happened that the great King Khusew-Parviz chanced to pass by on returning from hunting. Hearing sounds of merriment and laughter, he dismounted from his horse and peered through the bushes growing at the edge of the stream. He caught sight of the beautiful Sherin with her wonderful hair falling around her like a cloak. The King fell in love with her and determined to lose no time in making her his wife. His wooing was fast and fierce, for, finding the girl nothing loath, he mounted her on his fleet black horse and galloped away with her. It is said that a Persian sculptor, hearing of her beauty, asked the King to relinquish her to him that he might immortalise her in marble. The King, not wishing to offend the artist, promised to do so on one condition. Farhad, the renowned sculptor and courtier, must perform the difficult

the excellent rule of Queen Semiramis, we find another example of what has so often occurred, a country ruined by weak government by an incompetent ruler surrounded by flatterers and sycophants, and opening wide the door to intrigue, self-advancement and the fanatical folly of those who seek power and who would for their own ends destroy all that was good, even to the treasures of the past, though by so doing they sent men back to the cave and the jungle. When the nation deteriorates, it is certain that the Government is at fault. The people can be led, and it is their

task of bringing water from the back of Bis-i-Tun rock into the road-way. So great was the sculptor's determination that, overcoming all engineering difficulties, he succeeded in accomplishing this stupendous work, which endures even unto the present day. Then the crafty King told Farhad that the beautiful Sherin was dead, and, overcome with grief and despair, the lover is said to have thrown himself from the rock and to have been dashed to pieces. It is an interesting fact that not far from this rock Sir Henry Rawlinson found the key to the cuneiform inscriptions which had puzzled *savants* for so long.

Queen Sherin was a great sportswoman, and it is said that she was the first woman polo player in Persia, where polo is the great national game. Wonderful rock carvings depict the great King and his Consort following the chase. An arch was built for the Queen, from the top of which she could watch the animals being driven past for her benefit, the scene being laid in an immense park.

On one of the rugged rocks not far from Queen Sherin's archway there was once to be seen an image of the great Zoroaster himself, standing erect on a sunflower, dating from about 800 B.C., which is said to have been the only contemporary and authentic portrait of the great prophet.

instinct to follow the best ; but if the best is not there to lead and direct, they feel free to follow the worst, and the worst have not the real good of the country at heart. They work solely for their own advancement.

2

## EGYPT



## QUEEN HATSHOPSOUITO

**I**N 1903, the tomb of Thoutmosis IV was discovered in the Valley of the Kings at Thebes. It contained wonderful embroideries, blue pottery, painted wooden statues, and his chariot. A year later the limestone sarcophagus of his daughter, Queen Hatshopsouito, was found. According to ancient tradition, she entered the world amid shouts of joy, for she was heir to the throne of Egypt. Her father Thoutmosis summoned his high officials and presented her to them, placing the paschent on her head and thus creating her a Pharaoh. On the monuments she is shown wearing the costume of a man. Her chest is bare, her bosom flat, her hips slender. She generally wears a short waist-cloth, the diadem or helmet is placed on her smooth hair, and a beard is fastened to her chin to give her a masculine appearance. She was a great Queen and a great power in the land. She succeeded to the throne on the death of her father and, desiring to show what a woman could do when entrusted with the

administration of a Kingdom, she determined to hand down her achievements to posterity in a series of incised and painted mural pictures. Among them is the account of a memorable voyage she undertook in quest of the "incense tree."<sup>1</sup>

Hatshopsouito, we are told, "is anxious to tell us herself that one day when she was praying in the Temple of Ammon, the Master of Karnak, and in the Holy of Holies, an order was heard, a command of the god, to explore the ways that led to Pouanit, to traverse the roads leading to the 'Port of Incense.' Now the Theban priests of those days required a certain essence for sacrificial purposes that could only be procured through foreign traders, and this essence was often spoilt by the slow transit through Africa. A certain kind, that could only be found in Somaliland, pleased them more than any other perfume, and Ammon described and revealed its locality." . . . "The Ports' form a secret district of Tonoutir. It is in fact a place of delight. I created it, and wish to conduct Your Majesty thither, so that incense can be taken at will and vessels laden with it in all joy, living trees of incense and all the produce of the land." So Hatshopsouito determined

<sup>1</sup> *New Light on Ancient Egypt.*

to find the place. She was to "choose fine sound ships and to equip them in the most approved fashion, load them with goods likely to find favour with the savages and launch them on the Red Sea on the track of the incense."

A very interesting description is given of this expedition to an unknown country. The Explorers sailed south, through the Red Sea and the Straits of Babelmandeb, and at last reached the coast of Somali, the land that produced the incense. "The first stations they encountered on issuing from the Red Sea, Avalis, Malao, Moundos, Mosyllon, were unsafe exposed roadsteads; but beyond Mosyllon they found several creeks (wadys), of which the last, Elephant River, situated between Ras-el-Fil and Cape Guardafui, seems to have allowed ships of shallow draught to ascend. It is therefore probable that Hatshopsouito's sailors landed there and went up the river as far as the point where the tides are no longer felt, and stopped in sight of a village scattered along the bank amid sycamores and palms. Round huts with conical roofs were to be seen, with no opening except the door. They were perched on piles as a protection from wild beasts or floods, and were entered by movable ladders. Oxen, lying under the trees, chewed the cud. The natives were tall



and slender, and of a colour varying from brick-red to a brown so dark as to be almost black. Their beard ended in a point and their hair was sometimes cut short and sometimes arranged in rows of small curls or fell over their shoulders in thin locks. The men's costume was merely a waist-cloth, the women's a yellow sleeveless robe, tied at the waist and falling half-way down the legs. This fashion for women resembles their modern attire so closely that it may truly be said, "there is nothing new under the sun."

"The Commander of the Queen's squadron showed the gifts they had brought, which were placed on a low table: fine bracelets, two gold collars, a poignard with a sheath and belt, a battle-axe, eleven strings of glass beads, and the people were dazzled by the sight of so many beautiful things. The Chief, whose name was Parihow, was distinguished from his subjects by a boomerang which he held in his hand and also by a dagger. He wore a glass necklace, and his right leg was hidden by rings of yellow metal, probably gold. He enquired with surprise how the expedition had reached his country. 'Have you descended by the paths of the sky, or have you sailed by water on the land of Tonoutir? You have followed the road of the sun, for no one can be out of the way

of the Kings of the Land of Egypt.' Then came a great banquet, when the gifts were exchanged for what the Queen desired, and in the list of what she brought away were elephants' teeth, gold, ebony, cassia, myrrh, baboons and apes, greyhounds, leopard skins, oxen, slaves, and even thirty-one incense trees, uprooted with their mould and transplanted in baskets. The stowage was long and difficult, and when there was no more room on board and the ships were filled to overflowing, they set sail and steered for the north." In reading this description of the people of Somaliland, one is struck by its great similarity to the writings of present-day explorers. Nothing seems to have changed through the long succession of years that have intervened. "The bas-reliefs of Deir-el-Behare show the little squadron going with full sail towards the unknown; its arrival at the end of the voyage, the meeting with the natives, the emphatic palavers, the bargains freely concluded." The whole story is easy to decipher, thanks to the minute details of every action of the various personages concerned. On the return of the Queen, high festival was held: the Theban troops came out to meet her at the landing-stage of the temple, the people assembled to see the procession and the incense trees, which were planted

in the sacred garden. Her Majesty made an aromatic essence with her own hands with which to anoint her person, and we are told that "her skin shone like gold and her face like stars in the large Festival Hall."

We must hasten to another part of North Africa and dive into the history of two rulers, one a Queen who in ancient days reigned in unsurpassed splendour in Ethiopia, the other who now holds the reins of government of that kingdom in her hands.

## ETHIOPIA



## MAGDA, QUEEN OF SHEBA

**D**EAR READER, when you see the heading of this chapter do not close the book and say, "Oh, we know all about that naughty woman who went from her own country to Palestine, ostensibly to learn wisdom from Solomon, and when she returned to Ethiopia gave birth to his son." Yes; that is the bare outline of the facts that cover a romance of ancient history that reads like a tale from the *Arabian Nights*. When we think how the story has been handed down through the centuries in jealously guarded manuscripts, kept not only by the priests but watched over by the rulers of Abyssinia themselves, and how one precious document, "The Glory of the Kings," has been captured in war and has lain unnoticed and unread in the British Museum before being restored to its own country, we feel that we are in touch with a romance many centuries old and lasting even to modern times.

Magda or Maqueda, Queen of Sheba, is easily the most picturesque female figure in the whole of

ancient history. The story of her life is not only a romance but a beautiful love poem. It tells of a woman endowed with a virile personality and charm and inflexible will blended with the warmest of hearts, a combination of qualities which commanded the love and affection of her people. Living in the midst of dazzling wealth and surrounded by all the splendour of an Eastern Court, where her word was law, she still remained unspoilt; for in her great wisdom she forgot self. Her interest was centred in affairs of State and in her desire to better the condition of the people she ruled. But she instinctively knew that there was more knowledge to be obtained than the wise men of Ethiopia were able to impart. And thus grew the strong desire within her intelligent mind to learn this wisdom and to teach it to her people. So she considered the question of how best to attain this object.

The ancient manuscript already referred to probably gives the most reliable of all the versions of this famous story. Within the last few years this prose poem has been translated into French by M. Hugues le Roux<sup>1</sup> and thence into English by Mrs. John Van Vorst, and from it we learn of

<sup>1</sup> *Magda, Queen of Sheba*. Published by Funk and Wagnalls Co., New York and London. 1907.



THE QUEEN OF SHIBA  
(After Bido)





the great importance attached to it by the late Emperor Menelik of Abyssinia, as being the authority on which he relied to establish his direct descent from Solomon, King of Israel.

But before passing to the story of Magda, or Maqueda, Queen of Sheba, it will be well to give a short history of this manuscript and the manner in which it has been preserved. It was written in Gheze, the sacred tongue, which was not understood either by the Emperor, his dignitaries or the highest of his officials, still less by the lower classes of his subjects. In fact, Gheze only survives to-day in inscriptions upon monuments, in the liturgy and in prayers. Indeed, only a very few priests and their most erudite scholars are conversant with it at all. M. Hugues le Roux, a Frenchman who was travelling in Abyssinia, relates in *Magda, Queen of Sheba*, how he chanced to come upon the track of this precious document and how he persuaded the Negus to lend it to him for some months, though it is regarded as sacred by the Ethiopians.

"My companion . . . one day said to me : ' If you promise to keep it a secret, I will put you on the scent of a manuscript which for us Ethiopians is a sort of fetish. We might be able together to translate it into French and we could

thus show those who care for fine writing, a poem in prose which has the charm of the *Iliad* and the vigour of the Bible.'

"I asked what this poem could be, and Haile Mariam answered :

" 'It is a fragment of the chronicles we call *Fetha Nagast* (Glory of the Kings), which begin with the creation of the world and are kept up to date from day to day by our modern historians who at present are transcribing the glorious events which take place during the reign of Menelik. Of course there are numerous copies of the *Fetha Nagast*, all more or less alike, but with slight divergences however, for as the authors are anonymous, the scribes have not refrained, as time went on, to lengthen a story in one place or shorten it in another, to condense it or embroider upon it as seemed fit to them. This special manuscript to which I now refer relates the history of the Queen of Sheba, the ancestress of Menelik, her journey to the Court of Solomon, the birth of her son, and the visit which later this son made to Jerusalem.' "

My readers may remember that after the Battle of Magdala, in 1868, the English soldiers penetrated within the fortress to the very room where their vanquished enemy, the Ethiopian Emperor

Theodorus, had put an end to his own life, and carried off with them everything precious they could lay their hands on, and notably a certain number of books from which the Emperor Theodorus had never for a moment been separated. The English army having disappeared as it came, the Emperor John ascended the throne as successor to Theodorus. But the British Government did not renounce all hope of reaping some political harvest from a place where the scattering of seed had been so successfully commenced, and an English Admiral was despatched on a mission to Ethiopia. This Ambassador was the bearer of a splendid gold crown, and the story of his interview with the Emperor John was related to me by one who had it directly from the Admiral himself. It is as follows :

The Emperor, with his Imperial Crown on his head, received the English envoy, and perceiving the gift which was about to be offered him, he suspected that a proposal for a protectorate might ensue, so he scowled and said : " How could I wear two crowns ? Have I two heads ? " The Admiral asked King John if he might take back some more agreeable message than this to Queen Victoria, to which the Negus responded : " Tell your Queen that her soldiers carried away from

Theodore's room a book which is dearer than any other to the Ethiopian Emperors. It is the history of the Queen of Sheba and of her son : Our Book. I pray God that it may be returned to me." Evidently the English were eager to satisfy King John, for from the great collection of books which their soldiers had taken at Magdala they hunted up in London the manuscript for which the Negus had asked and sent it to him as he desired.

But it was not ordained that the adventures of the precious manuscript should end here. Years, before the English ever came down as far as Khartoum to drive out the Mahdi, the Negus John, like the Christian Prince that he was, had waged war against the infidels, a war which, in his eyes, had the character of a Crusade. Menelik was then King of Choa, a province of Abyssinia, and he alone accompanied his sovereign to this campaign. My reader knows the issue : the Emperor John was killed, and Menelik returned to Ethiopia with all haste to possess himself of the Imperial Crown, the sceptre of the King of Kings which, by usurpation, had been formerly snatched away from the hands of the Kings of Choa, his ancestors.

Thus occupied with affairs of State, Menelik did not stop to count the books which the pious

King John had left in his tent. Among these there happened to be the very manuscript which the English had found by the bedside of Theodorus and which the Emperor John had recovered from London, and which he in turn carried with him wherever he went. It was not fitting that such a relic should fall into the hands of the Mussulmans. The manuscript accordingly disappeared, no doubt owing to the solicitude of John's confessor, or of one of the monks who formed the Emperor's circle of intimates. "Since then," Haile Mariam said to me, "all traces of the precious document have been lost, but I think I know where it is hid—not far from the Emperor. If Menelik would only reach out his arm." Two months later the Emperor, having recovered this very precious relic, entrusted it to M. Hugues le Roux. On the title-page the following words were inscribed: "Presented by the Secretary of State for India. August 1868–393." At the back of the last page was written: "This volume was returned to the King of Ethiopia by order of the Trustees of the British Museum, December 14, 1872. J. Winter Jones (Principal Librarian)." The seal shown on the manuscript is that of Menelik as Emperor.

This, then, is the document so highly prized

by the Abyssinians ; it gives the life-story of the Queen of Sheba and her son Menelik. The wisdom of Solomon was famed far beyond his little kingdom of Palestine. Stories of his wealth and greatness had filtered through even to Ethiopia. These tales were principally brought by Tamrin, the merchant-in-chief, a man who was rich and the owner of five hundred and twenty camels, all loaded with his belongings. He was also possessed of seventy boats, with which he traded between the two countries. The Queen sent for him and questioned him about King Solomon, who had already heard of the wealth of Tamrin. Magda lost no time, and charged her merchant-in-chief to proceed at once with all the most valuable and beautiful merchandise he could procure to Judea and Jerusalem and seek audience of the King. She desired him to return and tell her of the learning and wisdom of which she was in quest, so as better to fulfil the trust that God had given her as ruler of the Ethiopian people. Tamrin betook himself to Solomon with all haste, and was astounded at all he saw and heard at his Court : and having seen all, he wondered at the love Solomon bore his people and at the perfection of their laws and their code of morals. At length the time came when he must return to his mistress.

Then the King took from his treasure splendid presents for Ethiopia and sent him away in peace. On his return he bestowed on the Queen what Solomon had sent, and told her all that he had heard and seen : how his house was organised, how invitations were sent out for banquets, how magnificent was the pomp and circumstance of his Court. And as she listened to Tamrin her heart grew bold, and she determined to set out herself and learn this great wisdom. Then the Queen assembled her people and addressed them : " Let my voice be heard by all of you, my people. I am going in quest of wisdom and learning. My spirit impels me to go and find them out where they are to be had." With a single voice her servants and retainers replied : " O, you who are all to us, must not be deprived of this Wisdom which you desire. If you depart, we depart with you. If you remain, we remain. If you live, if you die, we shall live, we shall die as you do."

Then Magda set out in great state. They had loaded seven hundred and ninety boats and mules without number with food for the journey, and with this mighty cavalcade the Queen set forth, her trust in God. When she reached Jerusalem she gave the King many presents, and he did much honour to her and gave her a palace near his own,



and morning and night sent her food. Also he sent raiment for fifteen of her personal suite, which dazzled the eyes for grandeur. He was building the House of the Lord, giving the measurements to the workmen, directing the carpenters and stone-cutters and goldsmiths, and teaching them the angles and curves they should follow. All this he showed to Queen Magda, and told her he was building the Ark of the Covenant of the God of Israel. "It is through Him I speak and that I walk and that I think. My wisdom I owe to Him." Then the Queen said: "Now can I no longer worship the sun, but I wish to worship the Creator of the sun, the God of Israel." "Day by day she went to him to hear the word of Wisdom, so that she might always keep it in her heart. And day by day he went to her to answer all she had to ask of him. And day by day she went to him."

It would appear from the manuscript that during the six months that Magda remained in Jerusalem learning wisdom from Solomon, she was not actuated by any love or passion for the King himself. Hers seems to have been an intellectual admiration, a real anxiety to learn all she could from the wisest of men. When she had learnt much to take back to her people she sent the following message to Solomon: "My wish would be to stay

with you ; but because of those I have brought with me, I must return to my kingdom. God will grant that all I have learnt from you may bear fruit in my soul and in the soul of those of my people who, like me, have heard you."

But when the King found that Magda was about to leave for her own country, he gave way to his lust for possession of the woman whom he so greatly admired and who had never shown undue admiration for him. When he received her message, he pondered deeply in his heart : " This woman, full of beauty, has come to me from the uttermost parts of the earth ; who knows if it be not the will of God that I should have seed of her." So he sent a discreet message to the Queen in response, saying : " Since you have done as much as to come hither, will you leave without seeing the glory of my Kingdom, the workings of my Government, without admiring how my soldiers manœuvre and how I honour the dignitaries of my Kingdom ? I treat them like saints in Paradise. In each of these things you will find much wisdom, so I beg of you that you will come and be present at these spectacles. You shall remain behind me, hidden by a curtain. I will show you the things I tell you of now, you shall become acquainted with all the customs of my

kingdom, and this Learning which has pleased you shall remain with you till the end of your days."

The Queen did not appear to suspect that Solomon had any motive in asking her to remain beyond that of gratifying her great desire for knowledge, for she says : " I was ignorant, and through you I have learnt great Wisdom. I was detestable, and I have become one of the chosen ones of the God of Israel. That which you now ask of me is only so that my knowledge and my honour may increase. I will come as you desire."

But it is clear that Solomon had other thoughts in his mind, for in a very old book we find a pretty legend of the Queen of Sheba. It relates how, when the Queen went to visit Solomon, she was received in an enormous Hall in the Palace, which was lined on either side with palace attendants bearing buckets of water. The King had been told that she had the most beautiful ankles in the world, and as she walked up the Hall to the throne at the further end where Solomon awaited her, at a given signal the contents of the buckets were sent swirling across the floor. The Queen hurriedly lifted her skirts high, and Solomon was delighted to find the information he had received was entirely correct.

There is yet another legend which puts the

incident in a rather different light. Solomon was evidently trying to find out all he could respecting the personality of the beautiful Queen. He had been told, probably by a jealous woman, that one of her feet was cloven like a goat's. When she came to visit him, he was determined to find out the truth of the story, and ordered an array of men with buckets of water to be in readiness to swill the marble floor of the Hall as she approached his throne. This they did, and as she jerked her skirts high to escape the water, a piece of wood floated towards her ; she stepped on this and crossed the stream dry-shod. It was said that Solomon had thirty rings of silver bound round the piece of wood, and it was these thirty pieces of silver that induced Judas Iscariot to betray the Christ.

The King gave a splendid entertainment ; everything was conducted in the most formal manner and with all the magnificence to be expected of an Oriental ruler. When the King entered the Hall of entertainment he was followed by the Queen who, from a seat behind him, witnessed all that went on at the banquet. She was amazed at all she saw. Solomon had raised a throne for her covered with silken carpets fringed with gold and pearls. The air was perfumed by the rarest

scents, and servants brought her a repast that was specially prepared for her, with but one acid drink, so that she might become very thirsty. When the service to the guests, stewards, councillors and servitors had been seven times renewed, and when they had departed the King rose and went to the Queen, who was then alone, and begged her to "rest here till to-morrow out of love to me." Sheba evidently had no idea that all this display and her specially prepared food had been arranged by the King for his own ends. His plot was deeply laid, for she replied, "Swear to me by your God, by the God of Israel, that you will not use your strength against me." And Solomon answered: "I swear to you that my force shall make no attack upon your honour. But now in turn you must swear that you will touch of nothing within this palace." The Queen smiled and said: "Why do you who are so intelligent talk like one who knows nothing? Have I pillaged or hidden away anything in the Palace of the King, without the King giving it to me? Do you believe really, my Lord and my King, that I have been drawn hither by the love of your treasures? Heaven be thanked, my kingdom is rich enough to afford me all that I need. It is your Wisdom that I have come here to seek." What followed

can only be told in the words of the manuscript, which is somewhat lengthy but very clear.

Solomon said, "Since you have requested that I swear, it is suitable that you likewise should swear. An oath must be met by an oath, if neither one is to be dupe of the other." She answered, "Then swear that you will not lay hold with violence upon my honour, and I will promise with all my heart to touch nothing of what belongs to you." He swore and he made her swear. Then he got upon his bed, which was made ready in the next room to this one, and she remained where she was.

Immediately he gave orders to the servants in attendance to wash a vase and to fill it with very pure wāter, and to put it where it might be seen in the room of the Queen. Then the man was to close the doors and the outside windows. The servant did as Solomon had ordered him in a language which the Queen did not understand.

Solomon did not go to sleep, but he feigned unconsciousness.

As for the Queen, she dozed a little ; then she roused herself, got up, and found that her mouth was dry, for the King had with malice given her food which created a thirst. She was tormented by this thirst. She tried to bring the saliva to her

lips to moisten them, but she found none. Then she wished to drink the water she had seen before she had fallen asleep. She looked towards Solomon and she could see him, for the house of the wise man is like the splendour of the day, and by his learning, with diamonds he has produced in the ceiling the figures of the sun, the moon and the stars. The King pretended to sleep heavily, but he was awake, and he was watching until the Queen should rouse herself to drink the water. She got down from her bed, she walked stealthily, she lifted with her hands the vase of pure water. But before she could drink he had seized her by the arm. He said : " Why have you broken your vow ? Your promised you would touch nothing in my palace." She was trembling, she answered, " Is it breaking my vow to drink a little water ? " " And what more precious treasure than water have you known under the sun ? " She said, " I have sinned against myself, but you will be faithful to your vow and you will permit me to drink." He asked, " Do you free me of the oath which I have given ? " She said, " Be free of it, but let me drink." He let fall her arm ; she drank and after she had drunk he did as he would with her and they slept together. Now as the King was sleeping he had a vision. He saw a dazzling sun which

came down from the heavens and shed its rays upon Israel. This brilliancy endured a certain length of time, then the sun moved away. It stopped in its course over Ethiopia, and it seemed that it was shining there for centuries. The King waited for the return of this star to Israel, but it did not come back. And again he saw a second sun which came down from the heavens and which shone upon Judea. It was brighter than the sun which had preceded it, but the Israelites blasphemed it because of its ardour. They raised against it their hands with sticks and with swords. They wished to extinguish it, so that the earth trembled and clouds darkened the world. Those of Israel thought that this star would not rise a second time. They had put out its light. They had buried it. But in spite of their watchfulness the buried sun rose up again. It lighted the world. Its light illuminated the sea, the two rivers of Ethiopia, and the Empire of Rome. Further than ever it withdrew from Israel, and it mounted upon its former throne. While this vision was descending upon King Solomon in his sleep, his soul was troubled and his mind worked like lightning. He awoke trembling. Then he admired the courage, the force, the beauty, the innocence and the virginity of the Queen, for she had



governed her country since her earliest youth, and during this delightful time she had kept her body in purity. Queen Magda said to Solomon, "Send me back to my country."

"He went within his Palace, he opened his treasure, he gave splendid presents for Ethiopia, and important riches, dazzling raiment and everything that is good. Then he got ready the caravan of the Queen: chariots, animals. The chariots numbered six thousand. Some of them rolled upon the ground, others moved by the aid of the wind, the King had built them according to the learning which God had given him."

The Queen went away satisfied, and Solomon accompanied her part of the way with great pomp and ceremony. Then he signified that he wished to speak to her alone. He took a ring from his finger and giving it to her, said, "Take this ring in token of my love. If thou shouldst ever bear a child this ring will be the sign of recognition. If it should be a son, send him to me, and in any case the peace of God be with thee. While I was sleeping by thy side, I had a vision. The sun which before my eyes was shining upon Israel moved away. It went and soared above Ethiopia. It remained there. Who knows but that thy country may be blessed because of thee? Above

all, keep the truth which I have brought thee. Worship God with all thy heart. Do His will. It is He who chastises the proud, who protects the humble, and who honours the poor. He disposes of riches and poverty. Life and death are in His hands. Heaven and earth belong to Him. Nothing escapes Him. May God be with thee. May thy journey be a safe one."

These visions of Solomon seem to be somewhat prophetic, as we shall see later in the story, when the glory of Solomon's kingdom departed. But in the meantime Queen Magda continued her journey till she arrived in the country of Larba Disarea, where she rested till she gave birth to a son, and then she set out again and entered her country with great grandeur, where all her dignitaries received her and brought her presents of great value. The Queen distributed her wealth among the needy. She then took up the reins of government again and ruled her kingdom well and taught her people all the wisdom she had learned, and none of her subjects dared to disregard any of her orders. She brought up her son most carefully and taught him much wisdom. When he was twelve years old, he began to be curious about his parentage, and asked his companions whose son he was, and went to the Queen. "Majesty, tell

me who my father is." "Why do you ask? Do not seek to find out," she replied. So he waited a long time before putting the question again. He was then, according to the description in the manuscript, a beautiful boy, strong of limb and very like King Solomon, and he learned all the manœuvres of war, the management of horses, hunting of wild beasts and the governing laws, but he was restless, and when he reached the age of twenty-two years, he said to the Queen, "I leave you to go and see the face of my father. I shall return by the grace of God—the God of Israel." So the Queen called the faithful Tamrin, the chief of her merchants, once more, and she bade him make ready for this journey and conduct her son to King Solomon. She commanded that his escort should not leave him, and she also commanded that he be crowned King at Jerusalem, because hitherto it had been the law of Ethiopia that a woman might only reign there provided she kept her virginity. Then she bestowed upon her son the ring the King had given her long ago, to serve as a token of recognition, and that it might also seal the union which the King had had with her. Then she took leave of her son. When he reached the Province of Gaza, which Solomon had given the Queen of Sheba at the time of her

visit, he was received with many greetings and much honour. The people of the country thought he was Solomon ; so great was the likeness that they threw themselves at his feet, crying, " Long live the King ! " And the news reached Solomon before he arrived at the frontier of Judea, and filled the King with wonder if this indeed could be his son, for he was much troubled because he had only one son, a little child of seven years of age. So he sent messengers to meet the merchant and conduct the young man into his presence. People were amazed when the cortège arrived. They said, " Behold, King Solomon," and when they saw the King upon the throne, receiving the young man and rising up to meet him, and throwing his cloak round his shoulders and kissing him on the lips and forehead, they knew not what to say.

The story of what took place at that time and how Solomon wished to make his firstborn, the son of the Queen of Sheba, King of Jerusalem, and of how he fêted him, is too long to write, nor is it possible to give the full details of how the Ark of the Covenant was stolen by the son and his attendants before leaving to return to Ethiopia. The Queen was waiting with all anxiety for the return of her son in order to have him crowned

King to rule later in her stead. And when at length he arrived with all the honours bestowed on him by King Solomon, she set out to meet him. She arranged for the grandeur of his reception to begin when he entered into the Province of Ethiopia. She was possessed of a glory of riches no one has ever held before or since, she, Queen Magda, and King Solomon in Jerusalem, to "these two were granted all science, all glory, all riches, all favour, the knowledge of all that is the beauty of thought and of expression." But while the coronation festivities were taking place in Ethiopia, the heart of King Solomon was heavy within him, the glory of his kingdom had indeed departed when the Ark of the Covenant was taken away by his son, and his vision came true, the star had risen in Ethiopia where his son was crowned by a woman.

Centuries have rolled by since the day when the Queen of Sheba crowned her son, and many vicissitudes have befallen her country during that time. The history of the rise and fall of nations is a subject of endless interest. Looking into the dim mists of the past it may only be possible to see that a stone of an edifice is missing ; the fog may be too dense to perceive how and why it was removed. The decay which set in was at first too gradual to be noticeable, but nevertheless

the structure was doomed. If we look for it carefully we always find that little germ of destruction which eventually brings down the edifice. But history does not always give the true reason or point out the underlying cause ; it deals for the most part with results and the chronicling of events. The history of Ethiopia, which in our day is better known by the name of Abyssinia, in which country it is included, is one of great interest, and has been more or less prominent in the public eye of late years. Indeed, it may be said that Africa as a whole is emerging from sleep, and the world is fully alive to the fact that the dawn has come to the Dark Continent, which is gaining new vigour and strength in the light of day.



## ABYSSINIA





## EMPRESS ZAUDITU

**T**HE present ruler of Abyssinia is also a remarkable woman. She succeeded to the throne in 1916, and is the daughter of King Menelik II, who made Abyssinia the power in North Africa that it is to-day by consolidating the various kingdoms and provinces of which the Empire was composed, and in so doing almost doubled the size of his dominions by the addition of large territories. It was he who introduced many European innovations, such as railways and properly constructed roads; and Zauditu, his daughter, has undoubtedly inherited many of his qualities, to which are added a womanly tact and an inborn shrewdness which help her to steer safely through a maze of difficulties. While she is the motive power behind many schemes for social improvement, she is also the mediator between the priests, who uphold old-world methods, and the Regent, Ras Tafari, who is also Foreign Minister and favours the claims of new ideas.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> As Heir-Apparent to the throne of Abyssinia, the Ras Tafari visited England in July, 1924. Only once before had he seen the sea,

Like the late Emperor, Zauditu is a strong partisan of the policy of development and progress. But she knows that if innovations are pushed forward too quickly they will make trouble with the older priests, who are wedded to their ancient traditions and customs, so she very wisely deals with them by saying : " Let us wait and see if this new thing does not turn out to be good." Thus she escapes criticism and carries her point in the end. Mr. Rey, in his very interesting book, *Unconquered Abyssinia*, says that Zauditu, though small in stature, loses nothing in dignity thereby.

and that was during the War, when he went to Aden. There he saw, also for the first time, an aeroplane, and at once requested to be taken up in one for a flight.

The Ras was called upon at the age of twenty-three to fill about as difficult a part as could well be imagined—that of Regent—and it is a great tribute to his natural powers of resource that he has not only maintained but strengthened his position. He married a cultured lady, Waizeru Menin, and has four children, one of them a son born in 1916. He was educated with the help of the French Mission at Marran, and speaks French well. This enabled him to dispense with the services of an interpreter when he came to England. Like Menelik II, the Ras Tafari is progressive, and on the occasion when I met him, at a dinner-party in London, I was greatly struck by his intelligence and general knowledge. He was then occupying the house opposite the French Embassy in Knightsbridge, and a red carpet and a Guardsman on sentry at the door caused many enquiries about the Eastern potentate who was domiciled there. King George recognised, through the Queen of Sheba, his descent from Solomon, who, according to tradition, was his own ancestor also.

The Ras was very interesting on the subject of the old manuscripts and the ancient inscriptions of his country.



THE EMPRESS ZAUDITU, DAUGHTER OF KING MENELIK II

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She possesses the Royal attribute of tact, of which she gave evidence at the time of her coronation in a proclamation which contained a graceful allusion to Queen Victoria who, she said, was "a short woman like herself, but a great woman like she hoped to be." She is also quick and apt in her conversation, as a Foreign Minister found to his cost one day when reproaching the Empress with the shortcomings of her Government in dealing with the chaotic condition of some part of the country. The Empress knew full well of the chaos prevailing in certain parts of Europe, some of them not too far removed from London, and her reply was delightful: "Yes," said Her Majesty, "it is true. God is punishing most of the nations of the world by giving them bad Governments, but I do not think He is punishing Abyssinia more than a good many others."

One can picture the Empress, a pathetic little figure, lonely and aloof in all her grandeur, keeping up a state and dignity which she uses as a background, well knowing the value of display, conscious of how it impresses the mind of the general public, but never herself being overpowered or overwhelmed by it or by the dazzle of an Eastern Court, or by the power she wields, though she is largely autocratic, and is a driving force that

counts for independence and progress in her Ethiopian kingdom. A woman understands perhaps better than a man that in Nature all evolution is slow but sure ; a child must walk before he can run, and education will only develop the brains of those who are in a fit state to receive it. Seeds scattered on stony ground bring forth no fruit ; neither do they grow in darkness. And thus it is that Zauditu, with womanly intuition, steers clear of rocks and pitfalls and manages to lead her turbulent people. Before describing her amid the surroundings of her Court, where she is the centre of domestic life as well as the adviser of her Ministers, it will be interesting to look into some of the early history of Abyssinia, when Maqueda, or Magda, Queen of Sheba, ruled there about 1000 B.C.

This is one of the most important dates in Abyssinian history. The people are firmly convinced that Magda's capital was their holy city of Axum. This may have no foundation in fact, but many writers of the present day treat the tradition quite seriously, and say that the son who was born to Solomon and Maqueda was Menelik I, the founder of the dynasty which has ruled in Abyssinia for nearly three thousand years, and which is ruling there to-day. Our own Kings of England claim

to descend from Solomon in the direct line. It has been said that when young Menelik returned from visiting Solomon at Jerusalem, he brought with him the Ark of the Covenant containing the two Tables of the Law which his followers had stolen from the Temple, and was accompanied by a large escort, consisting of members of each of the Tribes of Israel. From this time onward Semitic influence increased in Abyssinia, and Jewish customs and religion were practised there, and during the seven centuries that followed the country developed both its civilisation and trade, but no very striking events are recorded. In the sixth century of our era, Cosmas Indicopleustes, a merchant of Alexandria, discovered at Adule, a port on the Red Sea, a marble throne and a marble tablet above it.<sup>1</sup> On the tablet was an inscription engraved in Greek characters, recording that Ptolemy Euergetes, in the third Egyptian Dynasty and in about the fourth year of his reign (c. 243 B.C.), invaded the East and captured Abyssinians and elephants which he trained later for war in Egypt.

On a great obelisk at Axum there are records of

<sup>1</sup> Cosmas Indicopleustes, though probably a merchant of Alexandria at the time he discovered the inscription, afterwards led a monastic life in Egypt, where he wrote his *Christian Topography* in the Greek tongue.



King Auzares, and during his reign (*c.* A.D. 330) there occurred an epoch-making event—the conversion of Abyssinia to Christianity. Again there would appear to be no very remarkable events to record during the next four centuries. When the country generally was converted to Christianity, a certain section, the Falasha, refused to accept the new doctrines, remaining a people apart and retaining their Jewish beliefs. About the year 960, Queen Judith, who was then ruler, raised the Falasha in revolt. Their supremacy did not last long, but during its sway the country was swamped in blood and laid in ruins. Then King Lalibala, who is said to have been the builder of the wonderful rock-hewn churches, came to the throne ; but in spite of all vicissitudes the House of Solomon has continued to reign, even unto this day ; and the rock-churches, with roofs and pillars hewn out of the living rock, remain unharmed by the deadly hand of Time.

In Abyssinia the Mosaic law, the feudal system, and the most modern ideas jostle each other throughout, and the introduction of the new does not appear to displace, but to exist side by side with, the old in the life of the nation, which, to quote a recent writer, is “ young to-day, though it was powerful when the Book of Genesis was written,

and was Christian when our own ancestors still worshipped Thor and Odin."

The Abyssinians are more or less a highland race, and great sportsmen, living on plateaux in mountain country and disliking the lowlands. Like all highland races they are very independent and jealous of encroachment on their country, nor do they desire to overrun their own boundaries. They are a proud race and have maintained their independent position through centuries of ceaseless warfare ; and they are proud of having maintained their religion through fifteen hundred years against every attack. Menelik II referred to this in a circular letter to the Powers in 1891, in which he said : " Ethiopia having been for more than fourteen centuries an Island of Christians in the midst of a Sea of Pagans." Outwardly, at all events, they show great reverence to their churches and monasteries, of which there are many.

In the fourth century Frumentius was consecrated first Bishop of Axum by Athanasius, Patriarch of Alexandria, and ever since then the Abyssinian kings have been crowned in Axum, within the precincts of the Church of Mary, to which women are denied admittance. The following quotation is from Mrs. Rosita Forbes' most interesting book, *From Red Sea to Blue Nile* :

“ Nothing feminine is allowed inside the many enclosures of a church dedicated to the Madonna, and the rule is so rigidly enforced that no mare or cow, hen or goose, may be kept in the adjoining houses of the priests. One wonders if a sparrow building her nest under a convenient eave would be excommunicated with bell, book and candle ! ” This state of things gives rise to greater wonderment when it is remembered that the Abyssinians are governed by a woman who is looked up to by all classes with the greatest respect and who identifies herself entirely with the life of the people. It is related in the book above referred to that at the time of the author’s visit to Addis Ababa, the capital of Abyssinia, the Empress and her Court were in mourning, it being the seventh anniversary of the death of Taitu, the consort of Menelik II, “ in memory of whom a great feast was to be held at which five or ten thousand would be fed. Custom insists that the reigning sovereign should take part in every form of material life, so the Empress was busy supervising the hospitable preparations, and could see no one, not even her Ministers. ‘ I am busy in the kitchen,’ she reproved those who had sought audience ; but the courtesy which is an Abyssinian characteristic caused her to send us a message that, if we cared to come to

the palace at seven next morning, she would receive us before beginning the work of a long and varied day."

"Zauditu, daughter of Menelik, Lion of Judah, Queen of the Kings of Ethiopia, received us on the second story, in an octagonal pagoda-like room spread with fine carpets and hung with portraits of Menelik and his consort. There was no furniture except the three seats placed for us, and the lower chair on which the Empress was enthroned, her feet on a velvet cushion, behind her one lady-in-waiting, on either side her chamberlains and priests. Like so many of the Queens of history Zauditu is very small, but her stature is magnified by an impassive dignity of manner. When we were presented to her, her mourning necessitated a plain dark cloak, and only her eyes and cheeks appeared between the muffling folds of gauze. Even the hand we touched was covered with the same white silky stuff, but the great black eyes, set powerfully under a broad forehead, were characteristic. They were intelligent and quiet with the wisdom of 3000 years, old descent, and the peace of much thought. The audience was short, for the Empress insisted that she must set an example of industry to the domestic hive, which stirred and ground, and baked and roasted and brewed." This interest

n domestic work, especially work for women, seems an attribute specially marked in Eastern Queens, for at the moment at which I am writing the Begum of Bhopal is in London taking lessons in homecrafts to enable her to have Indian women instructed in schools which she intends to establish on her return to Bhopal. Indeed, all through history the motherly instinct is very striking in women who rule, and their interest in education and development of industry and the betterment of domestic life in the homes of their people ; and while they insist on a proper maintenance of their army and on good equipment, it is looked upon as a necessity and as a means of defence rather than as a warlike fighting force. This is doubtless the reason why, when women rule without interference, their reign makes for peace and prosperity and gives time for the country to develop quietly in its own way.

It is not possible here to describe in detail the life of Abyssinia as it is to-day, or to do more than refer to the ancient monuments, the great monoliths raised on platforms, in which vessels were cut resembling a Greek kalyx to receive the blood of victims slaughtered on altars as sacrifices to the great Sun-God in Mithraic worship. The mud huts of the present day must cover vast treasure-houses,

waiting for the historian and archæologist of the future. The ancient stones covered with fragments of carving and inscriptions will throw light on strange events and legends of past centuries ; but we must wait in patience until these mysteries are revealed, as they will be in the fullness of time. At present the traveller who is unable to dive into these hidden stores of treasure for want of knowledge is more interested in the life of the cities which radiate from the markets, packed as they are with thousands of peasants, merchants, men-at-arms, hill-men, women riding donkeys or on foot, men on horseback or in motor-cars, all wedged in a medley of moving colour and variety, the new and the old mingling together. Africa is primitive ; below the surface smoulder ashes of ancient violence. But there the people are of a gentle nature, dominated by the palace and the churches. Every orthodox Abyssinian church has a copy of the Tables of the Law of Moses, and at the Feast of the Epiphany the Arks that hold them are borne in procession through the town. Mrs. Rosita Forbes had the good fortune to see one of these processions, and so vividly describes it in her book<sup>1</sup> that I must ask her pardon for quoting it.

<sup>1</sup> *From Red Sea to Blue Nile*, p. 25.

“ At sunset we stood on the hill above our camp and watched the crowds swell up towards the red-draped shelter prepared for the Tablets. From a distance it looked as if the sand had blossomed. The sound of drums, shrill pipe-music and triumphal songs came up from the gardens where the broom was like golden butterflies and canna lilies stood guard against bougainvilleas. Slaves hurried by with the last bundle of rugs for the tents of the devout. Women followed, carrying baskets of bread, or calabashes on their heads, the drums rolled nearer, and from every side came priests, monks and deacons, rosaries at their waists, the crutches on which they leaned during the long church service carried by an excited mob. The mob seethed and eddied till it was like a sea-foam. Suddenly the song merged into a cry of adoration. Every figure seemed to fold up as, with heads bowed to their feet, they acknowledged the approach of the Ark. Very slowly, between the trees, came the lute players and the escort, and with clamour of voice and music, eddy of guns and spears, these swayed like poppies, the gorgeous velvet umbrellas, gold embroidery, lilac and red and purple, under which walked the arch-priests. The sunset picked out the gold in each flaming vestment, blazed on the square-carved crosses,

lit every fringe and bauble. Against the mass of colour in which silk and velvet and jewelled embroidery ran riot the censers swung their trail of smoke, the mighty crosses swayed,

“ Between the poppy-heads that were umbrellas, two figures, their humanity smothered in the stiffness of the richest of brocade, bore the Tablets on their heads, covered in exquisite stuffs, so that nothing could be seen but the shape.

“ Unnoticed the sun went down behind the hill, but in the hollow where the tents were pitched as close as mushrooms, the clamour swelled again. The Ark of the Trinity and Our Saviour passed down towards the pool, and behind them walked the Governor Imaru with his chiefs and his soldiers. For a moment I thought the sunset was reflected on another wave of white which surged up from the town, but a thousand welcoming voices cried ‘ St. Michael ! ’ The third Ark passed on to join the glamour of gold and jewels beside the water.

“ As we walked slowly through the coffee trees, we could see the last procession, St. George’s, winding down the mountain from the church on its crest. To the age-old cry of women, that gurgling ululation that is the throb of Africa’s rejoicing, it came, a Christian token against a setting of pagan violence. There was a fight now in the valley,



but nobody knew why it began. A man staggered out with a bleeding head. A scrum of struggling figures swayed round the original combatants. All night long the drums crashed from the hill-side, while the priests kept vigil beside the Arks and the devout watched and prayed and ate their sheets of Lenten bread, the great men in their tents the soldiers beside their stacked arms, and the poor rolled in their newly-washed rags."

NEW ZEALAND.



## AHUMAI

**T**URNING to New Zealand and glancing at its history through the ages, we find that women have always been held in high esteem, and though, owing to the tribal system of government, which has been in force since the very earliest times, no ruler has ever been able to assume the title of King or Queen, yet many of the chiefs and chieftainesses of the various tribes in both islands have possessed those outstanding qualities which make for patriotism, good leadership and fine administration. The law of primogeniture has always been strictly enforced, and the eldest child, son or daughter, succeeded to the chieftainship on the death of the parent.

It has not been possible to obtain a reliable biography of any of these chieftainesses, but the following story of Ahumai, the wife of the brave Maori chief Rawi, may serve to illustrate the fearless and intrepid character of the women of the ruling class.

The incident took place in 1864, during the

New Zealand War, when General Cameron laid siege to a great Maori fort with its three hundred defenders, and surrounded it with two thousand British troops, well armed and equipped. He sent a message to Rawi, demanding surrender and pointing out that resistance was hopeless. The Chief's reply was : " We will fight on for ever and ever ! " The General then invited the Chief to send out the women and children, promising them a safe conduct through the British lines and an escort to their homes. To that invitation Ahumai herself sent the answer : " If our husbands and sons go down in this struggle, of what use are our lives or our freedom to us ? We will stand or fall together ! " Spoken like a Queen and a descendant of Queens ! The fort held out until food and water failed and most of the warriors were slain. Ahumai herself was wounded by a bayonet-thrust, but lived for many years afterwards proudly to exhibit the scar—a memento of her heroic efforts in the cause of freedom.

**HAWAII**

[REDACTED]

## I. KAAHUMANU, OR FEATHER-MANTLE

**M**AUNA LOA is one of the biggest volcanoes of the world ; it is said to be 14,000 feet in height, and is one of a group in Hawaii, that sunlit island of dreams in the Pacific Ocean. After sleeping peacefully for some time, in April 1926 a group of these volcanoes burst forth once more, and from air and land thousands of people watched the fiery display, when masses of molten lava and great clouds of steam were sent forth in fury, till the sea boiled, even at a distance of several hundred feet from the shore. The old Hawaiian medicine-men gathered together in fright to chant incantations in ancient form, appealing to Pele, the Hawaiian goddess, not to destroy their homes.

Travellers describe Hawaii as a Paradise, the most beautiful island in the world : no words can portray the colouring, the pureness of the atmosphere, the graceful outline of its palm-clad mountains, the sunsets and dawns, when every moment



the picture changes to a fresh riot of light and colour, the reds and yellows melting into purple with vast rays of light slanting down through the transient rifts in the clouds.

This lovely jewel set in the sunlit sea has been a veritable Naboth's vineyard on account of its climate and fertility as well as its beauty. And, situated as it is in the Pacific Ocean, its strategical position has considerable value, for the Hawaiian Islands constitute the most important of the Polynesian group.

"The discovery of this group is generally attributed to the famous navigator Captain James Cook who, in the year 1788, during the course of his third voyage round the world, sighted Dahu and several of the neighbouring islands, finally meeting his death at the hands of the natives upon his second visit. But later historical research has revealed the fact that the islands were known at a much earlier date.<sup>1</sup>

"It would appear that the Hawaiians were not a cruel people and they were sorry for this deed of murder, for one writer says: 'Captain Cook being hit by a stone and perceiving the man who threw it, shot him dead; he also struck a chief with his sword. This chief immediately seized

<sup>1</sup> *Constitutional History of Hawaii.*

the Captain with a strong hand, intending merely to hold him, and not take his life : for he supposed that he was a god and could not die.' After his death the body of Captain Cook was placed in a cave ; the natives who were present said, ' The foreigner was not to blame. Our people stole his boat : to recover it he tried to take our king on his ship.' These natives then go on with a long story of the attack, and conclude by saying : ' After he was dead we all wailed, we thought he was the god Londo, and after his death we revered his bones.' When Lord Byron visited the island, he erected a monument to Captain Cook near the spot where he was slain, and he also did useful work with the aid of a scientific corps ; he had the beautiful Bay of Hilo accurately surveyed and had observations taken from the volcano Kilauea. The first arrival of missionaries took place in 1820, and their advent worked a great change and fostered the nobler qualities of the more intelligent of the natives, and before long more than one-ninth of its entire population enrolled in the public schools. We find that in the year 1840 the Constitution came into effect, which provided for (1) an executive department of King Kuhina Nui and subordinate Governors appointed by the Crown ; (2) a legislative department composed of King Kuhina Nui,

the House of Nobles and the House of Representatives ; (3) a Judiciary, composed of King Kuhina Nui, four Chief Justices appointed by subordinate Governors, subject to the King's approval." (See *Constitutional History of Hawaii*.)

It seems remarkable that so early in its history the Hawaiians formed a Constitution for their Government. This speaks for the high intelligence of the people. Fourteen years later, in 1854, a Constitution was decided upon which advanced in the direction of popular liberty, for it granted universal suffrage, differentiated the functions of Government, making them coincide with the three departments into which constitutional Government is usually divided, and placing certain checks upon the hitherto unlimited power of the King.<sup>1</sup> But the experiment of carrying on a Constitutional Government of the Anglo-Saxon type was a doubtful one in a country with a mixed population and was a difficult problem, for by then people of all nations were getting a footing in this desirable little monarchy, and "we cannot but admire the rare ability and unselfish patriotism of the men, both whites and educated natives, who for more than thirty years made it fairly successful. It seemed for a while that these islands would give

<sup>1</sup> *Hawaiian Blue Laws*, p. 4.

the world a lesson in the art of combining widely different races under one Government. The Kings of the Kamehamehan line were, as a rule, sincere patriots, having some conception of their position as constitutional sovereigns, and of the true policy to be pursued towards the foreigner." But it was hardly possible that such a state of things could last in a country where, besides the Hawaiian population, there were Americans, British, Chinese, Japanese, Germans and Portuguese to govern, and the American interests predominated among those of the foreigners.

But we must stop for a moment and go back a little to describe a wonderful woman who for thirteen years (1819-1832) was Queen Regent of Hawaii. Woman held an important position and exercised large functions in Hawaii, because rank went with the mother and not with the father, except in cases of adoption. "Moreover, apart from this fact and the superiority of chiefs and chieftainesses as a class, there was always a strain of genuine nobility in many a native which asserted itself under trying circumstances, even among the women." Feather-Mantle, we are told, "from being a haughty, unforgiving savage, became a conscientious and kindly ruler, anxious to lighten the burden and eradicate the vices of her people.

She was very slow at first in giving encouragement to the first American teachers who came to the islands in 1820. Until the latter part of 1824 she treated these foreigners with Queen-like hauteur." "Just look into the thatched house of this Queen," writes one of the missionaries, "and see the missionary's wife stand patiently for one hour waiting for her to return from her card-playing to have her dress tried on, and only hear her say, 'Oh, bother, oh, bother!'" Another year passes, and you may see the same Queen at her writing-desk, with her maidens round her, learning to use the scissors and needle, in her workroom a work-table, a bedstead, a glass window and a primer." She was fifty years of age and large and stately, but she devoted all her time and energy to turn the tide of heathenism in favour of Christianity. Her authority being absolute, her example was very powerful. She mastered the art of reading in a few days, and gave up card-playing when, in the beginning of 1825, she took hold in earnest of the work of reforming her subjects in all the islands, and by her efforts education became general until all the people, young and old, insisted on being taught.

When the Queen Regent went to church with her husband, it was in the state coach (once a

tinker's waggon), drawn by fifteen natives. The natives called her the new "Kaahumanu," and were ready to do whatever she commanded. When the second American teachers came to Hawaii, they were received by the Queen Regent's deputy, the Acting Governor of the island. They were taken in a yellow one-horse waggon to the door of the Royal lady's house. "She was dressed in striped satin, blue and pink, with a muslin shawl and a Leghorn bonnet. Her manner was exceedingly affectionate, she led the procession to the mission house." "She was seated with immense stateliness in her carriage, a light handcart painted gorgeous blue, spread with fine mats and beautiful damask and velvet curtains." Feather-Mantle doubtless took her name from the rare and beautiful Royal mantles made in Hawaii to be used at the coronations of the Kings and Queens, and then put away for the next occasion. These mantles are entirely made of gold feathers taken from a black bird that has one little feather like shining spun gold in each of its wings, so it takes thousands of feathers to make a mantle such as the one that is so carefully preserved in an airtight glass case in the the British Museum and is so seldom seen.

"The Hawaiians employ athletic men to catch

the little blackbirds called Oo, each producing only one or two yellow feathers on the wings. When these are plucked, the little birds are set at liberty, to be caught and plundered another day. Five feathers constitute a tax and are equal to one dollar in money. The feathers, time and labour necessary to make a cloak have been estimated to amount to hundreds of thousands of dollars. When finished, the cloak resembles delicate plates of fine gold.”<sup>1</sup>

It is needless to say that, through jealousy, intrigues were rife in the entourage of a woman of such force of character and brilliancy, and we find that the man whom she put in charge of the young King began to give her anxiety. He had been made a Governor, and in a year or two he and his wife “lapsed into both intemperance and debt.” Also he induced unscrupulous foreigners to plot against the Queen Regent and to lead the King into bad habits. Unfortunately for her, a man whom the Queen relied on for his sound judgment died in 1827, giving the unsatisfactory Governor more scope for his bad behaviour, for he was then engaged in plotting with a foreign Consul and others for her overthrow. However, his labours were in vain, because he could not win over the

<sup>1</sup> *The Story of Hawaii.*

high chiefs of the land or shake the young King's loyalty to the Queen Regent. At last almost the "entire company of malcontents went with the Governor, sailing away in 1829. They were heard of again at one port, but nothing more was known of him or his vessel." Thus the Queen Regent of Hawaii was delivered from a man who might have been a great blessing to the Islands, had he not been influenced by unprincipled white men to oppose new reforms. So Feather-Mantle went on unchecked with her good work. In September 1829 the laws against murder and other crimes were published ; also new laws against violation of the Sabbath and on the subject of marriage. Many foreigners denied that they were subject to these or any of the laws of the Kingdom, and when a protest was signed and presented, the undaunted Feather-Mantle promptly issued a proclamation in which foreign residents were informed that all laws would be enforced on foreigners and natives alike.

By this time there had been great improvements made all over the Island. The new palace, erected near the fort, was well furnished, good two-story houses were built and shipyards and wharfs established. Kaahumanu, the Queen Regent, made but one mistake in her rule, and that was



when Pope Leo XII was allowed to introduce the Roman Catholic faith into the Islands and to send several Jesuits to Honolulu in 1827. She had been taught the Christian religion by the missionaries and had swept away all idols from her land, and she could not differentiate between them and the Crucifix and pictures of the Virgin and Child which were in the new small chapel built in 1828-29. She commanded the priests to cease their efforts to proselytise her people, and ordered the natives who had crucifixes to surrender them. "It is not strange, however, that the Queen Regent and the older chiefs regarded any approach to the worship of images as an act tending to sedition. They could not understand the principle of the separation of Church and State, and they had fought to destroy all images throughout the land. The Crucifix and other furniture of the Catholic Church was suggestive to them of the old image worship. Besides, as has been said, the priests were identified, justly or unjustly, with a disloyal faction; they were therefore felt to be dangerous to the State. The fasts of the Church seemed to the Hawaiians similar to the system of the discarded *tabu*."<sup>1</sup> The Queen Regent and the chiefs were very firm, and after

<sup>1</sup> *Hawaii and its People.*

vainly endeavouring to have the priests taken away by a Prussian ship at a fair price, the chiefs sent them off in a vessel of their own at a great expense, and landed them at San Pedro, California.

Not long after the expulsion of the priests Feather-Mantle's health began to fail, so she moved, by the advice of her physicians, to her house in Manoa Valley, a beautiful spot commanding a fine view. Streams of running water flowed through the grounds. The house was situated on the edge of a wood, dark with flowering trees and filled with birds, and was handsomely furnished and fitted with mahogany and had all the comforts of civilised life. Here this remarkable woman came to die. She had achieved wonders for her people. Thousands of her subjects could remember the time of human sacrifice, which now no more cursed the land. Tens of thousands could read and write. Her monument remains in the laws she proclaimed in person "against murder (chiefly infanticide), against drunkenness and boxing (bloody contests), against theft. All the people must regard the Sabbath. When schools are established all the people must learn." One could hardly believe it possible that a woman who, in her early years, had lived in paganism, a despot

ruler, could have the will and power to carry out in thirteen years the great work she accomplished with so much love and tact, with high endeavour for the good of her people.

In 1833, soon after the throbbing of that great affectionate heart was stilled for ever, the young King Kamehameha III announced to the chiefs his intention to assume the sovereignty of his Kingdom. He was not quite twenty years of age, and his half-sister Kinau had taken the position of Regent; but although she was a woman of character she was not equal to her predecessor, and found it difficult to cope with the youthful excesses of the monarch. For a time he followed his wild revels without restraint, "till it seemed as if the nation, under such influence, would revert to heathenism, with all the evils added which depraved foreigners brought to the Island."

In November 1843 the two nations, France and England, engaged reciprocally "to consider the Sandwich Islands as an independent State, and never to take possession, either directly or under the title of a protectorate, or under any other form, of any part of the territory of which they are composed." Hawaii was thus admitted into the Family of Nations on a footing of equal rights with all

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other independent Governments. The President of the United States also accepted the decision of Daniel Webster fully to recognise the independence of the Hawaiian Government and Hawaii and its people.

## II. LILIUOKALANI

**K**ING KALAUKAUA, worn-out with incessant political turmoil and by the irregular life he had led for many years, died in January 1891. Having no heir, he had named his sister Liliuokalani as Queen and her niece, Princess Victoria Kaiuiani the Princess Royal, as Heir-Apparent. On the day the King's body arrived at Honolulu for interment, the Queen took the oath to maintain the Constitution as it stood. As may be supposed, her task on ascending the throne was a difficult one. "The first conflict came at once over a constitutional question, with the Queen and her supporters arraigned on one side and the Cabinet on the other. The latter claimed that the Legislature alone had authority to remove them from office, the Queen claiming she had a right to choose her own Ministry. An appeal was made to the Supreme Court, and the question was decided in favour of the Queen."<sup>1</sup> Liliuokalani was a woman of great force of

<sup>1</sup> *Hawaii and a Revolution*, by Mary H. Krout.

character and courage and was undaunted by opposition ; but the race question had by now become acute, and was at the bottom of the trouble of 1893, when the Hawaiians composed only about two-fifths of the whole population,<sup>1</sup> and foreigners were entering the country in ever-increasing numbers. It seems to be an inexorable law of Nature that when white races invade a native territory either for commercial reasons, a gold rush, or to exploit a fertile country with a beautiful climate and surroundings, the aborigines are absorbed or slowly die out. But through the efforts of the missionaries, the Hawaiians were enabled to make a stand against extinction in face of approaching civilisation with more vigour than any other of the once savage races. Therefore the rejection of the Treaty of Annexation was a great blow to the Americans resident on the Island, "who hailed with joy the idea of once more having the old flag unfurled above them."

To go back a little : In 1887, Princess Liliuokalani, as she then was, accompanied Queen Kapiolani to England, attended by a large suite, to be present at Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee. They were received with every honour due to Royal visitors. It was while they were in London

<sup>1</sup> *Constitutional History of Hawaii.*

that the Hawaiian party heard disturbing news from their country, which hastened their return to Honolulu, and they left England as soon as the last entertainment given by the British Queen to her Royal visitors had taken place. Hawaii was then more or less in a state of discontent, which continued to smoulder till the death of King Kalakaua. He celebrated his fifty-third and last birthday by a reception at the palace, a regatta, a balloon ascent, and a firework display. At the time of his death Hawaii had reached a high state of civilisation, and when his body was lying in state in the throne-room of the Jolani Palace, the ceremony was attended with great pomp. A new organisation, called the Sons of Hawaii, had been formed just before the King's death, which is thus described by a writer on *Hawaii and Its People*. "The men were mounted on the finest horses, and the King reviewed them from the steps of his palace. With their horses at full gallop they came up the avenue, each man holding aloft a lighted torch. Among them were natives and whites, some of the latter being sons of Americans with a missionary ancestry. They drew up in front of the King and made their salutes." One of the remarkable things which the writer noticed in Hawaii was "the readiness of all



QUEEN EMMA



QUEEN TITOKAHI



QUEEN KĀHŪMĀNU





classes to fraternize after armed or unarmed disputes between different political parties as soon as the particular matter of dispute was settled."

The beautiful Jolani Palace was set apart for the Royal Family, and an amphitheatre holding ten thousand persons was erected in the spacious grounds. In a description of a reception there it was stated that "the Queen had eight ladies-in-waiting attired in black velvet trimmed with white satin." The Hawaiians are a light-hearted people, and find amusement in every diversion that offers; singing and love of flowers are natural instincts with them. They are very quick to pick up new ideas and utilise the latest inventions of civilisation. It is not easy to make people in England realise the refinement and culture of the people of these remote Islands. "On seeing the security and ease with which these Hawaiian women sit in their saddles, one wonders that there ever could have been any prejudice against women riding in a manner that, like most other comfortable and sensible fashions, has been monopolised by men. Certain it is that no man could be induced to twist his knee round the pommel and balance himself in a side-saddle, as is considered the fit and proper thing for a woman. One needs only to see the

ordinary and the Hawaiian fashion contrasted—the rider in her divided skirts seated on her horse as if she was part of it, and the woman of the conventional habit more or less insecure and a good deal more ungraceful—to realise how much the first is to be preferred.” “ Women of all classes and conditions swim as well as ride ; the warm climate is particularly accountable for this. On account of the perfection of the bathing, riding parties by moonlight to Waikiki are among some of the attractive entertainments, when the whole party dip in the warm lagoon, partake of a gay little supper and then ride home. This, under a full moon and with the distant cloud-veiled, mysterious mountains, the palms along the beach rustling in the wind and the foam of the surf breaking on the shore, forms a characteristic picture of the poetical and fascinating life of the Hawaiians. Often when the mermen and mermaids come out of the sea, they return to their villas, don ball gowns and dance until dawn breaks overhead and the singing boys dismiss them with ‘ Hawaii Pon,’ the Hawaiian substitute for ‘ God Save the Queen.’ ”

No wonder that Liliuokalani loved her country, no wonder she wished to guard it for her people ! She, like all the great women of history, was ready to fight for it to the last ditch. She was a lioness

fighting for her cubs, a mother for her offspring. But these Polynesian Islands were but a small kingdom surrounded by great moneyed nations. Intrigue was rife, the Constitution which Queen Liliuokalani proposed has only recently come to light,<sup>1</sup> "which invested the Queen with a wide extension of power." The provisional Government that was set up before very long continued to maintain itself. "One by one it surmounted all difficulties in the way of intrigue, foreclosure of public debt, treacherous uprising of the Queen's followers." We find that at this juncture the British people were looking on with interest, without, however, offering any assistance to this gallant little kingdom and its patriotic Queen, for in the *Forum* of March 1898 we see: "Mr. Bryce finds no occasion for cautioning the British people against the danger of extending their dominion in foreign lands, and does not intimate that Great Britain would have any hesitancy in adopting Hawaii with Kioulani as Queen, or even with Liliuokalani on the throne, if the United States should abandon that Republic and consent to the revolution, or assist loyalists in the re-establishment of the native monarchy." It was evidently not the British view that a native Queen was

<sup>1</sup> See American Commissioner Blount's Report.

unequal to administer with due competency the Government of her country. But the days of the old Polynesian kings and queens were numbered. Her Majesty was arrested by the Americans and brought to trial a month later, and soon afterwards signed her abdication. Later the ex-Queen wrote that she "signed the abdication to save the lives of six prominent leaders of the insurrection." She was released on parole eight months after her arrest and returned to her beautiful home, "where orchids, violets and geraniums were still in bloom, and clusters of loquat plums gleamed in the sunshine." But she was not permitted to leave the Island of Oahu. Later her civil rights were restored to her, and she received a pardon and a passport for a trip to the United States, where she had an interview with President Cleveland at Washington.

At this interview she presented him with documents from the Native Hawaiian League, requesting her restoration to the throne. After President McKinley sent, with his approval, the Treaty of the Hawaiian Islands to the United States Senate in June 1897, Liliuokalani filed a protest in the State Department with a request that the President would withdraw the Treaty; but her request was not granted. "During the ex-Queen's

visit to Washington when she filed her petition<sup>1</sup> the Japanese Minister there also formally protested against the Treaty." There remained still in the United States a divided public opinion both on the question of the responsibility of the United States Government for the success of the revolution in Hawaii, and on the question of annexation. Some took the side of the Queen, feeling that she had been deprived of her just rights. From their standpoint she was cruelly treated by the American party in Hawaii, who had first obtained wealth and influence in the Islands and then used these resources to seize the Government for themselves. There appears to have been a strong feeling, too, at that time in England about the dethronement of the Queen, for in an article on Hawaii in the *Daily Telegraph*, dated "London, February 26th, 1895," it speaks of "the most unfortunate and ill-treated woman in the world, Queen Liliuokalani, the rightful sovereign of these lovely islands and the lawful ruler of their dusky inhabitants. This comely if somewhat portly lady, whose face and presence became well known to many in this country during the year of the Queen's Jubilee, was as much the legitimate sovereign of the beautiful archipelago as any other monarch of his or her

<sup>1</sup> *Hawaii and its People.*

dominion." The article is too long to quote at length ; it is interesting reading, because it doubtless expresses public opinion at the time with regard to " this clever and stately lady, whose real fault has been that she loved her country and was every inch a Queen."

" Thus the history of Hawaii as a nation comes to an end. The group discovered by Captain Cook, an Englishman, under the protection of Great Britain, 1794, provisionally ceded to Great Britain in 1843, its independence recognised by England, France and the United States the same year, now becomes an integral part of the territory of the United States, and as a nation ceases for ever to exist. Its record is finished, its story is told, its book is closed." The author of *Hawaii and a Revolution* describes an audience with the ex-Queen in her delightful villa, which was built with wide verandahs above and below. It was painted white, which contrasted pleasingly with the heavy foliage which overshadowed it. The doors and windows were wide open. Men dressed in white duck suits came and went, while women in native dress sat in the shade stringing garlands of tuberoses. " The Queen was sitting upon a sofa, but rose when I entered the apartment and extended her hand, greeting me with the utmost

informality. She requested me to be seated, and as the conversation progressed I had the opportunity of studying her face. It was strong and resolute, the features were irregular, the complexion quite dark. The hair was streaked with grey. She had the large dark eyes of her race, her voice was musical and well modulated, as is the case with all Hawaiians, and she spoke remarkably pure and graceful English. Her manner was dignified and she had the ease and the authoritative air of one accustomed to rule. I spoke of the beauty of the country, the charm of the climate, and the cordial hospitality which I had received from all classes of the people. 'Yes,' she said, 'we love our beautiful country and we love to hear it praised.'" It must have been a pathetic sight to see the deposed Queen in her severely plain gown of black and grey serge without a single ornament, still evincing in her speech and bearing much of her former dignity. She was an accomplished musician and fairly well read, devoting much of her time to the study of languages, as she was no longer engaged in duties that required her full energies and attention.

The Hawaiian group, only a few small specks on the map, is nevertheless a strategic point in the struggle for supremacy in the vast region of



the Pacific and of the great national movements in that wide ocean. Australia, New Zealand, Japan, China, and indeed all the Great Powers with maritime and commercial interests are factors in this modern phase of the world's progress. With its delightful climate and natural productiveness, the country has become the garden land of the world. No wonder that Liliuokalani was loath to surrender her authority over such a realm. She abdicated after the *coup d'état* of 1892, and died November 11th, 1917.

## **SOUTH SEA ISLANDS**



## SALOTE, QUEEN OF TONGA

I REMEMBER, when a child, having a book given me called *The Coral Island*, and can recall my absorbing interest in reading of the adventures of three schoolboys in the South Pacific Islands. Peterkin and Jack are as familiar figures to me now as they were then, and as those of Robinson Crusoe and his man Friday must be to most of the young people who read that story in the present day. The coral reefs and blue lagoons of my childhood's imagination became realities in later years, when I saw azure skies with white-winged gulls whirling against them, screaming and diving in the golden light to seek their prey in the foaming surf that beat on the reefs surrounding the clear, clear water within them. Down in its depths were miracles of beauty : fish of orange striped with black ; red and gold and silvery forms of strange inhabitants of tropical waters disporting themselves among the pearl-oyster beds ; flowers and seaweed in that vast garden only known to the denizens of the deep.

I have felt the hot wind on the shimmering beach, where canoes lay ready to be launched, maybe for fishing, maybe for a race, or to carry produce to some of the many islands in the Southern Seas, or for an expedition up a river overhung by banks covered with tropical verdure, whereon bamboos and tree-ferns and palms mingled in wild confusion. Mr. de Vere Stacpoole and other wanderers in the Southern Seas tell tales of strange adventures there, for the Pacific Islands are off the beaten track of the ordinary tourist. But I want more especially to give a glimpse of the Friendly Islands, because they are ruled by a woman who holds her sway over about 24,000 people.

Tonga is a Kingdom of Islands, governed by Queen Salote. It is described officially as follows : " The Kingdom of Tonga consists of three groups of islands, called respectively Tonga-Tobu, Haabai and Vavaw, together with the outlying islands of Niuatobutabu, Taofahi and Ninafoo, and lies between 15°30' South and 173° and 177° West, its Western boundary being the Eastern boundary of Fiji." The main group was discovered by Tasman in 1643. I mention these facts because Tonga is not much known in the Northern Hemisphere. British coin is the only legal tender there, and the weights and measures are the same as

ours. In 1900 it was arranged, with the assent of the then ruler of Tonga, King George II, and the native chiefs, that the British Commissioner should assume the exercise of civil and criminal jurisdiction over all the subjects of foreign Powers there, as well as the supervision of the financial administration. Tonga is not so isolated from the outer world as one might suppose, for the Union Steamship Company's vessels call there regularly and maintain a service between it and New Zealand, Fiji and Samoa, and its imports and exports are considerable.

When King George II died in 1918 his daughter Salote succeeded to the throne, and from her big white house, which looks down on her people, rules with the aid of a "Legislative Assembly which meets annually, composed of seven nobles elected by their peers, seven elected representatives of the people, and the Ministers of the Crown numbering seven, or twenty-one members in all." The elections are held every three years. In this strange little Kingdom, tucked away among the blue lagoons and coral reefs of the South Pacific, with groves of coconut palms showing along the sky-line (the fruit of which is a source of wealth), there are Roman Catholic, Unitarian and Wesleyan Methodist Churches, for the country is Christian ;

there are several colleges and more than sixty primary schools. So Queen Salote finds ample occupation in the government of her scattered little kingdom and in the enjoyment she takes in her beautiful surroundings. She takes herself seriously, as her father did. When news arrived of the world-war, even Tonga was stirred to its depths, and the Legislative Assembly, the Ministers of the Crown and the Representatives of the People were hastily called together to take counsel. It was decided that the Kingdom of Tonga should remain neutral !

## QUEEN EMMA

THE history of the South Sea Islands is always full of interest, incident and adventure. Stories of shipwrecks, of hidden treasures ; legends of daring exploits, of fierce conflict and personal courage of men who were cast upon dreaded reefs that form a natural ring-fence round the beautiful coral islands themselves, those " Green Islands in Glittering Seas " spoken of by Mr. Lavallen Puxley in his interesting book. But this fairyland, so remote from the rest of the world, holds many dark secrets, stories pregnant with cruelty, hardship and despair only to be guessed at and fitted into the legends of the past ; always tales of bloodshed, murder and cannibalism. Even as far back as 1735, the year that the *Golden Grain* was blown out of her course and shipwrecked when making for the coast of Africa, white men—yes, and women too—were stranded among native tribes in their jungle fastnesses. Indeed, from the year 1521, when, it is said, Magellan discovered the first Pacific island after



he had passed through the Straits that were afterwards called by his name, until the present day, the coral islands have furnished themes for exciting stories and romance and adventure almost incredible.

Even in these days the beauty of this Garden of Eden and the ever-changing colour of its lagoons lure botanists, explorers and tourists back and back again

"To where the sea-egg flames on the coral,  
And the long-backed breakers croon  
Their endless ocean legends  
To the lazy locked lagoon."

There are many problems presented by these islands yet unsolved which will doubtless puzzle future generations, so complex and extraordinary do they appear. Each group in that vast archipelago seems to be peopled with races more or less different, or by a mixture of various races, some of whom must be the descendants of men who were highly civilised but about whom little is known, while others seem not far removed from the missing link between animal and man. The different types belonging to these scattered islands keep to themselves and war with each other ; but all the races are unanimous in one particular—they acknowledge the supremacy of the white man,

whether they be of negroid extraction or of Melanesian or of Polynesian type.

In one of these islands a Samoan lady, Queen Emma, ruled. Probably the Samoans, who are pure Polynesians, are the best of all the races in the Pacific. Their development is good, both mental and physical, for they are described as a tall good-looking race, who move well and with grace. The women are particularly attractive, with gentle manners and soft dark eyes, and have made many marriages with white men. Some of them are so wonderfully fair that the children of such marriages are no darker than many sun-browned Europeans. Queen Emma is reported to have been one of these attractive ladies. She bought a large estate in New Britain and married a European. Indeed, she had very large possessions, for she owned several islands and travelled about a great deal in her own yacht and mixed much with the whites. Later, her children also married white men and women, so that eventually they came to be regarded as practically white themselves. But at times, for all that she was so white, the "call of the wild" must have been strong within her, and now and then the Polynesian blood in Queen Emma's veins surged up and asserted itself. The strangely haunting rhythm

of the love-songs of the Samoans rang in her ears, the magic of their dances, which portrayed a series of scenes from their daily family life, must have cried to her inherited instincts. Even the graceful steps that were learnt by watching the movements of birds of paradise at mating time, when the male bird danced before his beloved to entice her—all were dormant memories, stored in the inmost recesses of her brain and rousing themselves at intervals. So Emma, now the Old Queen, now and then forgot her rôle of a modern civilised ruler and went back for a time to the old days and customs of the past. It is said that when a sing-song was in progress she would slip away, change into some disguise, and from behind a mask take part in the dances of the natives, forgetting for a while the present and living again in the Samoa of the past, before it became a resort for the whites in search of health, pleasure or gain.

This harking back to a more primitive life is not uncommon in "native" races. I remember when I was staying at the Palace of a Maharajah in India, where everything was conducted on European lines, the table appointments and attendance perfect and the cook a *cordón bleu*, the guests were asked one day to excuse the host and hostess from appearing at table. They felt the need of

a change, and curry and rice partaken of "native fashion" was the call of the moment to them. When they emerged from their retirement we resumed European routine and no reference was made to their absence. Indeed, a time comes into the lives of most of us, I think, when we crave for a little primitive freedom, a taste of the simple life, release from worry and mundane things. Who has not longed for a patch of purple heather on the moors, there to lie gazing at the blue sky and the mountain mists, listening to the hum of honeybees flitting from flower to flower, with only the call of wild creatures to break the stillness of a mountain glen? Mr. Langdon Smith expresses these feelings in his poem "Evolution":

"Till there came a time in the law of life  
When over the pushing sod  
Our spirits broke and our souls awoke  
In a first faint dream of God.

. . . . .

"Then when we linger at supper here  
Over many a dainty dish,  
Let us drink anew to the time when you  
Were a tadpole and I a fish."

And so the world goes on and builds up and pulls down. One race succeeds another, and nowhere can this strange law of Nature be better exemplified than in the beautiful coral islands of

the South Seas ; very little is known of the history of their past, very little of the wonders of the deep, of the beautiful sea-gardens, full of living flowers beneath its calm waters, where life is ruled by the laws of evolution and only the fittest survive.

Before bringing this little volume to a close, I should like to mention the romantic history of another little island, one almost unknown, called Sudest, off the coast of New Guinea, and tell the story of a remarkable woman who has ruled there for over thirty-three years. She is not a Queen in the accepted sense of the word, but a white woman who may only be mentioned here by reason of her wonderful personality and her courage in face of great difficulties. Mrs. Malony's life-work would indeed make an interesting chapter in a book on "Wonderful Women" and the way they rise in times of emergency without previous training of any sort.

This wonderful woman went out to Papua with her husband and his partner in 1889, when gold was reported there. Many men have gone under from time to time in the rush for gold, and Malony and his partner sank too. Most of the gold-seekers who went to the island then left after a short stay,

but these two men held on. Then Malony died and his partner sold out his share and returned to Europe. Mrs. Malony "carried on" alone, and has been overseer, carpenter, engineer, and many other things in her long career. She buys and sells copra, navigates her own boats, works the engines and does a hundred things besides, in addition to bringing up a large family. Now she is retiring from active business, but still shows the greatest interest in it and occasionally takes control herself. There are now five whites on the island and thousands of natives. It is interesting to learn what a British lady can do unaided when she holds a responsible position. In wisdom she guides alone the destinies of her people. She has a wonderful gift of adaptation to surroundings, sacrificing much that she formerly thought of the highest importance. But the whole story of life in this world is one of sacrifice, of an end to be won, of a price to be paid. But at the end lies victory for the strong : victory for the conquerors : the survival of the fittest. And in governing, as in every other walk of life, courage—moral courage in difficulties.



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